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THE ILLUSTRATED Sporting and Dramatic News.

LONDON: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1875.

THE STIRRUP CUP.

"Metbinks there be now many more of your tap-tub *chevaliers* and knights of the spigot, than of errants in the olden days of chivalry."—*Old Play.*



O! jovial knight, thy morning's thirst assuaging
In glowing draught from silver cold and chaste,
What fire within incontinently raging
Demands extinction in such burning haste?
See element with element engaging,
In vain—old Ocean's self might run to waste
Before his fountains could avail to float
The parched Sahara of thy waking throat.

Heavens, what a smack! and that responsive sigh!
The very liquor o'er thy palate hissed,
As when the thunderbolt from Jove on high
Some cool translucent rivulet hath kiss'd;
And now serene gleams thy bloodshot eye
Like danger signal through encircling mist;
A mightier impulse bears thy spirit up,
And kindles courage in the "Stirrup Cup."

What aspen tremors in the gouty hand
That lifts the goblet to thy quivering lips,
Thy Dulcinea smiles serenely bland,
Thy merry page with laughter holds his hips;
With generous wine thy glowing heart expands,
Its fire down-coursing to thy finger tips,
Thy palfrey revels in a lighter load,
And laughs to scorn the perils of the road.

Ha! ha!—the iron circle that oppressed
Thy throbbing head—where is its burden now?
Thy tongue, to morning courtesies addressed,
Wags free and fast, relaxed by vinous flow;
Who such an altered being could have guess'd
From that dull image of unleavened dough,
That into saddle rolled from restless bed,
With heart of copper, and with limbs of lead?

Strip off thy doublet, Knight, and show the scars
Seaming thy frontispiece from crown to toe,
Thy tokens gained in honourable wars,
Through "headlong valour rolling on the foe,"
Thy dinted sword and battered helmet bars,
And shield discomfited with many a blow;
Ride forth, Sir Knight, redressing ruth and wrong
The hero-theme of many a maiden's song.

What have we here?—oh errant, peccant Knight,
Soft as a woman's shows thy pampered skin,
Save where in turning backward from the fight,
Thy raiment soft allured the weapon in,
Perchance some termagant's or bully's spite
Brought thee to book by menace of a pin,
Or broken bottle on thy garden wall
Surprised thee reeling homewards from a brawl.

What mighty vessels hast thou drained of blood,
(Spilt in the cause of Bacchanalian rout)
And broached from stalwart vats the foaming flood,
To furnish forth some birthday drinking bout;
A host of bottles in thy front has stood,
Primed to the cork with treble-hearted stout,
Alas for foes that would perplex thy way,
They were all "dead men" by the break of day.

Yet dost thou bear upon thy bloated face
Some wounds accepted in unequal strife,
And furrowed scars the curious eye may trace
Wrought by the talons of vindictive wife;
(Such is the guerdon of supreme disgrace
Of those who war with Bacchus to the knife;)
And every blossom of the toper's rose
Smiles in the pimples of thy "jolly nose."

Ride forth, Sir Knight, the peaceful herds invade,
Go, scatter panic through the harmless fold,
And raise the terrors of thy butchering blade
Against the coney in his sandy hold;
On clacking roosts project the midnight raid,
And, while he struggles in the meshes roll'd,
Against the stag thy barb inglorious launch,
Intent to batten on his juicy haunch!

Oh shame!—the trusty sword thy fathers wore
Within its rusty sheath unburnished lies,
In place of armour gleams a polished store
Of cups, the cynosure of tipplers' eyes;
Thy shield's circumference is netted o'er
With cobwebs woven for besotted flies,
Buzzing around to sip the dregs of wine
Left from the drunken orgies of the swine.

What hast thou added to the trophied wealth
Of war or chase, in thine ancestral hall?
Where is thy noblest patrimony—health,
Gift of the gods, whose pleasures never pall?
Now creeping down the winding stair by stealth,
Thou feelest blindly round the cellar wall,—
One goblet more, to feed the inward flame,
And sweetest, since by secrecy, it came.

Ride forth, Sir Renegade: thine onward way
On every side with perils is beset,
Each tavern sees thee helpless stand at bay;
Whate'er the morn, the evening will be wet,
If friends invite, thou canst not choose but stay;
Bacchus and Barleycorn together met
On either side shall help thee, Knight, to sup,
And in the morning fill thy "Stirrup Cup."

AMPHION.

THE LAUGHING PRINCESS, AND THE KNIGHT OF THE RUEFUL VISAGE.

AN OLD-FASHIONED NEW-FASHIONED FAIRY GALIMAUFRY.

BY GODFREY TURNER.

ONCE upon a time, when geography was in a very unsettled condition, there reigned over the kingdom of Derrydowndee a monarch, named Blando the Secondy-Second, who was the contemporary of Grumbo, King of the Disenchanted Isles. The first-named sovereign, and his queen, Mollinda, had one only child, the Princess Joybell, who was near seventeen years of age when our story commences.

The capital of Derrydowndee was Heydownhdown. This fine city, which was built in the style of the period, over the left bank of the river Flam, was surmounted by the royal residence, a castle beautifully situate on the summit of a lofty eminence, and commanding indeed a bird's-eye view of the whole kingdom. By means of a telescope, King Blando could at all times of the day see what his subjects were about; and woe to any of them detected by his Majesty in the act of "grizzling." For you must know that Derrydowndee was a very pleasant country, where no grief or trouble was allowed on any consideration. Sighs and tears were punished with the utmost jocularity of the law. If a man looked miserable, he looked miserably—without his head. Everybody who cried, got something to cry for, and after that never cried again. A paternal government must set a good example to its children: and so the King, the Queen, the Princess, and the whole court and ministry were all as merry as grigs. In fact, they were so full of fun themselves, that they were positively obliged to employ in the capacity of Jester a man who had not a particle of fun about him. He alone of all the dwellers in Derrydowndee had a licence to look dismal.

All the offices of state in this powerful kingdom were filled by the Count Gracioso. He was perpetual Prime Minister, Grand Chamberlain, Chief Superintendent of Police, Lord Chancellor, Keeper of the Porte-Monnaie, Generalissimo, Admiral of the Pink and Pea-green, Hereditary Head Cook, Comptroller of the Bottle Department, Inspector of Mares' Nests, Master of the Fighting Cocks, and President of the Board of Play. He was also Royal Architect, and had built the city of Heydownhdown, in the style of the period, as I have already observed.

As for the Princess Joybell, no words can describe her loveliness, her amiability, her accomplished skill in everything, and, above all, her cheerfulness of disposition, which kept the court in continual good humour. She had a beautiful bower of roses in the garden of the castle, which inspired with delight everybody who looked on it. It was a fairy-bower; and indeed this charming Princess owed all her graceful qualities and possessions to her fairy godmamma, the Lady Houchette-Noire, who was related both to King Blando and his queen, and who was one of the most famous conjurers of her day. It was this wise woman who had endowed the Princess with all her sprightliness and good humour. It was she who took the infant in her arms at the christening, and said, "Joybell, my darling babe, be for ever happy! Laugh all your life long, child, and carry continual sunshine round you!"

Was that a wise gift, do you think? Hear the story out, and judge for yourselves. For my own part, I cannot help suspecting godmamma's kindness to have been as stupid a piece of cruelty as any ordinary witch with a black cat, a couple of tame toads, and a conjuring cauldron, could have invented from the depths of her comic malevolence. But, perhaps, Lady Houchette was not entirely her own mistress when she went to the christening of the little Princess Joybell.

One day the King, the Queen, and the Princess had been out for a walk, and when they returned from their customary inspection of the shop-windows in Heydownhdown, they found that Joybell's fairy godmother, Lady Houchette-Noire, had paid them a visit—unexpectedly, as was her wont—and was walking in the garden.

"Ah! my dear Noire," said the King, characteristically, as soon as he saw her, "how do? Mollinda, my love, here is our Cousin Houchette. Pray let us have something decent for dinner, and a bottle of the castle Yquem her ladyship liked when she last took us in our homely way. Joybell, my child, go kiss your godmamma. Dullman, make a joke this instant."

"But," said the unfortunate droll, who was much too stupid even to be a man of wit, "I've nothing to make it with."

"See, Mr. Dullman," said the kind Princess Joybell, coming to his assistance, "we bought you this at the Noah's Ark, in the Place des Folies." And she gave him a tastefully-painted bladder, tied on the end of a stick.

"What is it for?" asked Dullman.
"It's for you to hit people with; and that will be such capital fun! We shall all laugh so, you can't think!"

"Am I to hit people with this thing?" said the poor Jester, plaintively. "Suppose they shouldn't like it?"

"Not like it!" exclaimed the King. "That's the joke, man; that's the joke! Why, my friend, you're even more obtuse than I took you to be."

"It's a joke, then, to hit people with a bladder, stuffed full of wind, when they don't like it?" said Dullman.

"Certainly it is," said the King.

"Certainly it is," said Count Gracioso.

"Certainly it is," said the courtiers, in a chorus.

Dullman looked pensively at the painted bladder; then of a sudden swinging it round, he caught Gracioso cleverly on the tip of the nose.

"Ha! ha! ha! Ho! ho! ho!" You should have heard how the King laughed at this stroke of humour. The royal cachination brought the people out of their houses in the adjacent quarter of the city, down beneath the castle-walls.

"Ha! ha! ha! Ho! ho! ho!" Dullman, seeing that he had made a decided hit, gave the bladder another swing, and let the Count Gracioso have it harder than before. Then, just as the King was bursting into another roar of merriment, the fool let the bladder rebound, till it came plump in the middle of the royal waistcoat. The King looked grave. The Hereditary Head Cook and Master of the Fighting Cocks looked grave. The courtiers all looked very grave indeed.

"Come, I say, Dullman," said Blando, with stern regal dignity, "don't do that again."

"His Majesty says, 'Don't do that again,'" observed Count Gracioso.

"But why not?" Dullman asked, in his simplest manner.

"Because, sir—because we don't like it," said the King.

"Because his Majesty doesn't like it," said Count Gracioso.

"That's the joke," said Dullman; "that's the joke."

You see this poor man had really not the least notion what fun means.

"Well, my dear," said fat, foolish Queen Mollinda to her fairy cousin, the Lady Houchette-Noire, "and what's the news from Fairyland? Pray tell us everything."

"Then shall I tell your Majesty the truth?" said Lady Houchette-Noire. "Fairyland has no news, good or bad, worth putting in the papers. Oberon has lost heavily in mining speculations; he has a new scandal with a pretty butterfly-breaker; and his proposal to put a tax on glowworms has been received with a yell of popular execration."

"Well," said the Queen, "but I suppose Titania still keeps the elves in good temper by the brilliancy of her revels?"

"Her Majesty has given up those frivolous amusements," said Houchette-Noire; "and in place of mirth, and festive song and dance, we now have encyclopædic Tuesdays, at which Dr. Puck is the principal lecturer. On the currency he is said to rival Ricardo."

"Dear me," said Queen Mollinda, looking as puzzled as with that round, plump face of hers it was possible to look.

"While home affairs are dreadfully gloomy," continued Lady Houchette, "our foreign relations are unsettled, and even menacing. That troublesome person, our neighbour, Grumbo, King of the Disenchanted Isles, threatens invasion; and, so far from preparing to resist him, Oberon actually declares that he looks upon annexation as the very best thing that could happen to the country."

"Ha!" roared the King. "How sayst thou? Grumbo! Only let that contemptible tyrant and bully threaten us! Grumbo,

indeed! He knows better. But come, my dear Houchette, don't let us stand talking in the open air. Step in doors, pray. Queen Mollinda, where's the corkscrew?" And, with a grand flourish of trumpets, they all entered the castle.

All but Joybell. She, dear child, laughing to think what good fun it would be if Grumbo of the Granite Hand, King of all the Disenchanted Isles, were only to frighten the people of Derrydowndee the least little bit, stayed behind in the garden. And presently, wondering where she had left her diamond skipping-rope, she ran into her bower of roses in search of it.

While the Princess Joybell was looking for her diamond skipping-rope in the magic bower of everlasting roses, there came wandering into the gardens of that elevated abode of royalty, the castle of Heydownhdown, a knight so dismal and dejected in his behaviour, that he had been followed on his travels everywhere by his name of Sir Hippetoun Hawebury, the Rueful Knight. Tended was he by his faithful Squire, Ralph du Grippon à Rotir, and a little foot-page, carrying the good knight's portmanteau, battle-axe, and umbrella. The portmanteau did not weigh more than a hundredweight and a half, while the umbrella and battle-axe together may have brought it up to two hundredweight, or perhaps a trifle over. But the little foot-page was powerful for a boy of ten.

"Grammercy!" quoth the Knight, "'tis my usual luck! We have gotten us into private grounds, and shall have the dogs set on us, or perchance we shall be taken up as a party of strolling mummers, and set i' the stocks."

"Like enough, like enough, Sir Knight," said Ralph; "but we have passed through greater perils on our journey hither."

"Thou sayst aright, good Ralph of the Toasting Fork," returned Sir Hippetoun; "and, were I as other men, it might be that thy words would bring me certain comfort. But all is dark and desolate within this bosom. A fair domain have we here, I trow; and the sight of these goodly towers is not altogether unpleasantly associated with the smell, as I take it, of roast gosling. Woe is me; the savoury odour brings tears into my eyes; for I remember when roast gosling was grateful to my palate, as well as to my nose. Alas! that happy time has fled."

"Beshrew me, Sir Knight!" exclaimed the faithful Ralph; "but the vantage-ground of these lofty ramparts affords us a fair view of the city. Yonder I behold two hostleries of good promise, both ready of access. The nearer of the twain, as I make out, is the Crown and Cauliflower; a little beyond is the Oyster with Two Necks. Is it your pleasure that I try the one which is nearer first?"

"Do, good Ralph, do," the Knight replied; "and if mine host of the Crown and the efflorescent vegetable can give us no acceptable lodgment, why then see whether the convenient Oyster will not open to our need. I will e'en rest here awhile, if that indeed be resting which is a turbulent conflict of dismal phantasies. Leave me, I say, to wretchedness and woe!"

"Come along, Sir Page," said Ralph; "softly over the stones with that portmanteau!" and away went the two, not sorry to be rid for a while, of such doleful company as that of Sir Hippetoun.

Left, as he said, to wretchedness and woe, the Knight of the Rueful Visage communed in customary mood, with his spirit. "Who," said he, "who, under this sombre aspect would recognise the glass of fashion and the mould of form, the once gay and gallant—mum. Not even in the stony ears of this venerable castle-wall must the name be breathed. Spellbound by some baleful sorcerer, I wander about in a maudlin maundering manner, that exposes me to perpetual derision. Here comes a beauteous damsel, with whom, if melancholy had not marked me for her own, I should fall instantly in love." And sure enough, Joybell, having found her skipping-rope (the handles of which were encrusted with imitation diamonds of incalculable value), came tripping back into the garden, like— I'll trouble you for a simile.

"A stranger!" said Miss. "Ha, ha, ha! The Stranger, I should imagine, from his appearance."

"Fairest of maidens," said the Knight, "behold the most miserable of men."

"What an object!" the Princess remarked, to herself, of course, "He's better fun than poor old Dullman, ever so much." Then, addressing Sir Hippetoun, she asked, "Pray, sir, do you know anything of the laws of Derrydowndee?"

"They are sternly festive, I have heard," was the Knight's answer.

"Oh, you have heard that, have you? And does your information extend to the fact that lowness of spirits is punishable here with— and the Princess made a grim little motion with her hand, significant of chopping.

Sir Hippetoun repeated the gesture, and said calmly, for he was by no means deficient in courage, "Oh, yes, I know that. Would you remind me that my life is endangered by the dolefulness of my countenance?"

"I would," answered Joybell.

"Very kind of you, to be sure," the Knight rejoined. "But know, lovely being, that Sir Hippetoun of the Rueful Visage looks in the face of death, and laughs a gloomy and defiant laugh; that the axe of the headsman, preceded by a course of rack and thumbscrew, would, of all things, move him to hilarious merriment. Ha, ha! I repeat emphatically, ha, ha!"

"You don't call that laughing, do you?" inquired the Princess. "Ha, ha!" and she tried to force her rich contralto voice down to her shoes, for the purpose of imitative hilarity. "But had you not better go?" she added, with a touch of anxious compassion.

"At your command, angelic being, said the Knight. "Nay, at your hinted desire, Sir Hippetoun Hawebury will be off, or, as the vulgar say, take his departure. Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me." And off he went, to the Crown and Cauliflower.

"Poor fellow," said the Princess softly, to herself, as soon as he was out of sight. "I hope he'll get clear away, with that melancholy face of his. How funny it must be to feel sad! Here comes Cousin Houchette."

"Joybell," said Lady Houchette-Noire, popping out from the postern; "Joybell!"

"Oh, godmamma! How you made me jump!" cried the artful little puss, just as if she had not seen her witch-cousin approaching.

"Young lady," the old lady went on to say, with just a little touch of authority in her tone, "with whom were you talking but now?"

"Oh, indeed, with nobody, Coz, but a poor silly Knight, who will get into trouble, I'm afraid, before he is well out of papa's gaily governed kingdom."

"I know all about it," said her ladyship, as, indeed, being a witch, it is likely she did. "You are not so animated, my love, as I have seen you," Lady Houchette added, with a well-feigned carelessness.

"Oh, dear, do you think I'm not?" Joybell replied. "Well, perhaps animation is not always to be kept up by a diet of rose-leaves. And talking of rose-leaves, do you know I'm getting so tired with the colour of those blooms that cover my bower. Couldn't you change them for me, dear Cousin Houchette?"

The elder lady laughed. "If you wish it, my sweet child, certainly," she said. "What colour would you like best?"

"Oh, a nice quiet smoke-colour," answered Joybell. And no sooner had she spoken the words than Houchette-Noire, waving her stick three times in the air, pronounced the mystic spell, "Hey presto turno almosto blacko;" when the roses instantly assumed a tint about half a tone lower than charcoal biscuits.

"Oh delightful!" Joybell exclaimed. "But, godmamma, the inside of my bower is yet more tiresomely bright. I want you to change that as well. Now, do, do, do; and I won't tease you for anything else."

"Go inside, Joybell," the godmamma replied, somewhat sadly; and Joybell skipped into her bower.

Now, having a few minutes to spare, and the court of King Grumbo being only four thousand leagues and a kilometre from Heydownhdown, Lady Houchette transported herself magically to the presence of that monarch, with whom she was on excellent terms, without prejudice, as the lawyers say, to her relations, Blando and Mollinda. As soon as her ladyship had whisked herself off, far away from Heydownhdown, the restless Knight of the Rueful Visage, came prowling back to the castle, which, had he been wise, he would have shunned as a sensible mouse shuns a trap. As he re-entered the royal domain, he must almost have caught sight of Lady Houchette-Noire's steeple-

THE ILLUSTRATED
Sporting and Dramatic News
LONDON: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1875.
THE STIRRUP CUP.

THE LAUGHING PRINCESS, AND THE
KNIGHT OF THE RUEFUL VISAGE.
AN OLD-FASHIONED NEW-FASHIONED FAIRY CATALAN.
BY GODFREY TURNER.
Once upon a time, when geography was in a very unsettled con-
dition, there reigned over the kingdom of Britain a monarch
named Henry the Second, who was the contemporary of

indeed! He knew better, but came my dear friend's door?
let us stand in the open air. Step in, dear friend, and
Hollander, where's the corker?" And with a great flourish of
trumpets, they all entered the castle.
All but Joybell. She, dear child, laughing to think what good the
it would be if Grimmo of the Grimmo Hand, King of all the Dis-
contented Larks, were only to lighten the people of Derbyshire
the least little bit, saved behind in the garden. And presently
wondering where she had left her diamond stitching-needle, she ran
into her tower of roses in search of it.



CHRISTMAS IN THE NURSERY.—"OUR FAIRY STORY."—DRAWN BY WALTER MORGAN.

SPORTING AND DRAMATIC NEWS
LONDON: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1875.
THE STIRRUP CUP.

the principal feature. On the contrary he is said to rival Richard.
"Dear me," said Queen Hollander, looking as puzzled as with
that round, plump face of hers it was possible to look.
"While some affairs are dreadfully bloody," continued Lady
Hollander, "our foreign relations are unsettled, and even menacing.
That troublesome person, our neighbour, Grimmo, King of the
Discontented Larks, threatens invasion; and so far from preparing
to resist him, Grimmo himself declares that he looks upon invasion
as the very best thing that could happen to the country."
"He?" roared the King. "How darest thou? (Grimmo! Only
let that contemptible tyrant and bully threaten me? Grimmo,
must almost have caught sight of Lady Hollander's step."

And in the morning all the "Stirrup Cup."
On either side shall help these Knights, to sup-
Heads and Halcyons together met
If friends invite, thou canst not choose but stay;
While in the room, the evening will be wet,
Each tavern was due helpless stand at bay;
On every side with perils is beset.

Joybell slipped into her tower.
Now, having a few minutes to spare, and the court of King Grimmo
being only four thousand leagues and a thousand from the residence of
dour Lady Hollander, she had naturally to the presence of
that monarch, with whom she was on excellent terms, without pay-
ing as the lawyers say, to her relations, friends and relations. As
soon as her ladyship had whisked herself off for away from Hollander's
bedroom, the restless Knight of the Discontented Larks, came prowling back
to the castle, which had he been wise, he would have shunned as a
visible menace, a trap. As he re-entered the royal domain, he
must almost have caught sight of Lady Hollander's step."



CHRISTMAS IN THE DRAWING ROOM—"AMATEUR THEATRICALS: BEHIND THE SCENES."—DRAWN BY HARRY FURNESS.

crowned hat, as the nimble old woman went straight down into the ground, that being her method of making a short cut to the presence of King Grumbo. I am not quite sure whether or not Sir Hippetoun came back in time to see this wonderful sight; but, if he did, so completely was he the victim of a rooted sorrow that the feeling of surprise would hardly have entered his mind.

As he stood, the picture of wretchedness, pretty Princess Joybell came running out of her bower of cinder-tinted roses. She expected, naturally, to find her godmother, the Lady Houchette-Noire, in the spot where she had left her standing, but where Sir Hippetoun Haverbury now stood. So running up to that dismal intruder, and looking back all the time at the bower she had left, what does our silly Princess Joybell do, but fling her arms round Sir Hippetoun's neck, and exclaiming "Oh, you good, kind godmother Houchette," give him a kiss!

But the moment she had done this she found out her mistake; and, with a little scream, she cried, "Oh, you horrid man! What are you doing here, after I thought you had gone to get your head chopped off? And where's my godma? Oh, dear! I feel so strange! I think I must be going to cry."

"Going to cry!" exclaims the no longer Rueful Knight. "Going to cry! You don't say so! Just as I was going to laugh! I must laugh, too. I can't help it. Ha, ha, ha! Oh, you jolly little darling!"

"Don't speak to me in that manner, sir, I beg," the young lady cried, with mingled indignation and dismay. "I am the Princess Joybell; and—"

"The Princess Joybell," says Sir Hippetoun. "What do I hear? High treason by all that's ridiculous! It's time to be off." And away he went capering and singing like a madman on leave of absence.

Here was a charming state of things! That foolish little kiss had done it all. As the Rueful Knight became one of the jolliest dogs in Derrydowndee, the laughing Princess took to weeping as if she had never had a fairy godmother to make her existence smooth and pleasant.

Lady Houchette came back to the garden, just after her godchild had gone crying into the castle. Her ladyship had found King Grumbo, of the Disenchanted Isles, in an awful temper about his son Egrillard—that erratic Prince having gone off somewhere just as his royal papa intended to demand for him the hand of the Princess Joybell. Houchette had been absent from the castle of Heydownhodon a matter of six minutes; as you may easily calculate by reading back from the point where she dived down into the middle of the grass-plot, and Sir Hippetoun Haverbury came on the scene.

While the lady-witch stood looking round for Princess Joybell, our rushed King Blando and the Prime Minister in a state of terrible excitement.

"Why, what is the matter now?" she asked.

Matter indeed! "Oh, my dear Noire," exclaimed the King; "the matter is—What is the matter, Count? Tell her, tell her, and spare a father's feelings."

"Her Royal Highness the Princess Joybell"—Gracioso began.

"Ah, yes, cousin," the King interposed; "your own little god-daughter, to whom you promised perpetual happiness, has—Go on, Gracioso, go on! Why do you leave your sovereign to break the terrible news?"

Gracioso proceeded solemnly with the dread announcement, "Her Royal Highness the Princess Joybell has shed a tear!"

"Two tears," said the King.

"Too true," said Gracioso. "And, having got up to the second tear, it's morally impossible to say where Her Royal Highness is going to stop."

"But you, my excellent Houchette, can put all right again in a twinkling, I'm sure," said the King.

Houchette was not so certain about that, she said. It was seldom that her gifts failed; but whenever they did, as was now the case, she knew there was some influence too powerful for her to subdue. "We must find out what that influence is," she said; "and we must then go to work diplomatically. You say Joybell has shown alarming symptoms of sadness. Can you tell me the cause?"

"You, dear cousin, are the cause," said the distressed monarch—"the innocent cause, as nearly as I can make out from the poor dear child's incoherent account."

"I take the cause," cried Lady Houchette-Noire. "Pray how so?"

"Here comes Her Majesty, Queen Mollinda," said Blando. "She will tell you all about it." And, as he spoke, the Queen, trembling all over with agitation, like a calf's-foot jelly in purple velvet, sailed out from the castle; a most pathetic picture of maternal grief.

"My child, my child!" sobbed out Queen Mollinda. "Oh, Houchette, that any of us should live to see the day! Our dear, dear Joybell has been crying her eyes out, and it's all your fault, though you didn't mean it. You sent her to look at some change you had made in her bower, and while she went you went, and when she came you had gone, and somebody else had come, and she went and—oh dear! oh dear!—went and kissed somebody else; and that somebody else was a melancholy person; and now he has got Joybell's gaiety, and she has got his gloominess, and, and—"

"And that's all about it, eh?" said Lady Houchette-Noire. "Ha, ha, ha, ha! What's to be done now, my Royal cousins?"

"Where is the catiff?" cried the King. "Drag him instantly before us. Send for the executioner. Send for the Lord Mayor of Heydownhodon as well, in order that all may be done strictly according to law. When they have caught the miscreant, let the Lord Mayor deal summarily with the case, and order the headsman to do his duty on the spot. Never let it be said that the administration of justice was unconstitutionally managed in Derrydowndee."

"Will your majesty deign," said Houchette-Noire, "to look at this matter from another point of view? What is to be gained by a chopping off of heads? At any rate, there will be time enough for that, bye-and-by. You can't put a head on again, you know."

"But do we want it on?" the King expostulated.

"You may," said Houchette. "And, if my theory is right, you will."

"Speak," said Blando graciously. "We will summon patience to our councils. You observe, I am calm—calm and collected."

"Magnanimous prince," rejoined Lady Houchette-Noire, perhaps with a *souçon* of irony in her tone, "the Princess, your Majesty's only child, has kissed away her cheerful disposition, as I understand."

"Proceed," said the King.

"We must get it back for her," said her ladyship.

"Precisely," assented Blando. "But how?"

"It must be kissed back."

"Ha!" cried King Blando.

"It must be kissed back," the lady repeated, with firmness. "Now, only think, if you'd been in too great a hurry about chopping the man's head off," she added.

"Yes, to be sure, my dear," observed Queen Mollinda, "see what a good thing it is to be merciful. You know you can chop his head off when you've got all you want out of him."

"Lady Houchette-Noire," the King exclaimed, "do we understand you aright? Is it possible that you would venture to recommend us to allow a nameless vagabond, possibly with a banjo or a box of white mice, to kiss the Princess, our daughter? Madam, reflect."

"And why not kiss the Princess, your daughter, pray?" Houchette retorted boldly. "The Princess, your daughter, has kissed him."

"True," Blando assented. "That did not strike us before. What ho there!"

"What ho there!" echoed the Count.

"My good Gracioso," said the King, "nobody seems to be within call. Oblige me by running round to the Lord Mayor and telling him to make diligent search through the city for a person unknown. Let the person unknown, when found, be loaded with chains and brought hither directly. Fly, my Gracioso, fly."

Gracioso flew.

"Queen Mollinda," said the King, now that some of the weight of trouble for his darling daughter was off his mind; "Queen Mollinda, where is the key of the sideboard?"

"My dear, you've had quite as much as is good for you," said the august lady. "The key is in my pocket, and I shall keep it there."

"Humph," observed King Blando.

"I will go and find Joybell," said the kind lady Houchette, and away she went into the castle, leaving the King and Queen to themselves on the grass-plot.

"Madam," says Blando, "give me that key."

"I shall not," says Queen Mollinda.

"You drive me then," Blando returns, in accents of appalling severity, "to repeat—humph."

Back came Lady Houchette in a twinkling, with Joybell in her hand.

"My child, my child!" cried the Queen. But Princess Joybell was not in an amiable mood, you know, so she met her mamma's caressing language with—

"Oh, ma! Don't speak to me. I'm dreadfully miserable, and I want to be left alone."

"My darling Joybell!" said the King.

"Papa, don't bother," was the undutiful reply of the Princess Joybell. "Cousin Houchette," said the poor girl, turning round on the lady, "you're an unkind godmother, and I hate you. There! Oh dear, oh dear! How wretched I am, to be sure!"

At this moment Gracioso returned, bringing word that the Lord Mayor would attend his gracious sovereign's pleasure as soon as his lordship could put on his levée dress, furred gown, and gold chain, and have his hair curled. The Count had found Mr. Dullman, walking about in a thoughtful frame of mind, and had brought back that accomplished donkey with him, to cheer up the royal circle.

"My dear," said the King persuasively to his amiable consort, "we shall have the Lord Mayor here in a minute or two. Give me the key of that sideboard."

"You shall not have it, B," her Majesty answered. "It is in good keeping now, and I don't intend that it shall change hands."

"Come, Toosy-coosy, come; no nonsense! Let's have it, I say," the Sovereign said in a coaxing manner. Then, trying another tack, he added, "Mrs. B, do you hear?" But "Mrs. B." paid not the least attention.

"The old woman is firm," said King Blando. "Humph!"

By this time the civic procession was approaching, and a pursuivant craved the royal permission for the Lord Mayor to enter the presence. To this formal supplication, the King made a gracious response, exclaiming, "Let the trumpets be blown, and sandwiches be got ready."

With the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, Undersheriffs, Town Clerk, and Mace-bearer, marched in custody Sir Hippetoun, knight no longer of the Rueful Visage, but as gallant a personage as you would wish to see. Before they came to him at the Crown and Cauliflower, to fasten fetters on his legs, and to festoon the whole of his figure with clanking iron, he had arrayed himself splendidly in garments from his portmanteau, and the weight of his chains did not prevent his dancing into the very presence of royalty.

"Prisoner," said the King, "stand forth, and stand steady."

Sir Hippetoun Haverbury cut a few capers and turned a pirouette. He then bowed with consummate elegance, and stood smilingly before the King.

"Answer the questions we shall put to you," said his Majesty.

"First, what is your name?"

"Don't know," said the Knight.

"Eh, eh! not know! What is your business, then?"

"Can't tell."

"You are the man who had the audacity to be kissed by our royal daughter."

"I am that happiest of mortals, great sovereign," the prisoner replied. "Excuse me if I jump for joy." And he made three bounds into the air, springing each time several feet from the ground.

"Joybell, my child, come hither," said the King. "Is that bold stranger the one you kissed?"

"Ye—ye—yes," said Joybell, crying. "But he's eh—changed so, I hardly knew him again."

"Prisoner," said his Majesty, "attend. To-morrow morning you are to lose your head."

"Most of us do that once or twice in our lives, sire," said the Knight.

"I mean tee-totally," the King exclaimed.

"Ah," said the Knight, "that's a different matter. People usually lose their heads another way."

"I do for one," murmured the King, thinking of the sideboard.

"But never mind that, you are to be beheaded to-morrow morning early. But before suffering the penalty of your crime in presuming to be kissed by the Princess, you are to restore that kiss she gave you."

"Am I, really though?" said the astonished and delighted captive.

"And you had better look sharp about it," Blando said, "for the Lord Mayor is beginning to need refreshment."

"Fairest Princess," the Knight exclaimed, with a deference at once tender and worshipful, "most joyous belle of all Joybells, condescend, I pray your highness, to take back that priceless and never-to-be-forgotten kiss."

So saying, he advanced with great respect, raised his plumed bonnet with his jewelled right hand, and kissed the Princess on her soft blushing cheek. As he did so, the roses clustering round her bower blushed in sympathy, and changed back again to their natural hue, only a tint or so brighter than before.

"Well, dear child," said the King and Queen together, are you any happier now?"

"Ye—es; just a little," Joybell answered. "Oh, yes, decidedly. But—"

"But what, but what?" their Majesties anxiously inquired.

"I don't think it will last," said sly little Joybell.

"And the good-for-nothing fellow doesn't look miserable a bit," observed Queen Mollinda.

"Joybell," said the King in a stern voice, "are you happy?"

"A little," said Joybell.

"Only a little? That's not enough. What's to be done now?"

"I think I know," said Lady Houchette-Noire.

"I know I know," said Joybell to herself.

"Ino," says Dullman, catching fatuously at the pun, for he had been some years engaged in writing a burlesque for the Theatre Royal. "Ino, daughter of Cadmus and Harmonia. She married What-a-his-name, King of Thebes, and came to an untimely end."

Count Gracioso, having been for some minutes conferring with the King, now proclaimed silence and said, "His Majesty pardons the person unknown for being kissed accidentally. The person unknown will await the farther pleasure of his Majesty."

"Houchette," King Blando said, turning to his cousin the Fairy, "you are the wisest old woman among us. What do you make of this little crisis, eh?"

"The Princess," said Lady Houchette-Noire, "as many a princess has done in many another story, ought, I think, to marry the young gentleman who loves her, and then they ought both to live happy ever afterwards."

"Well, if it can't be helped," said Blando, "we must give our sanction to that arrangement."

"Stay," said Lady Houchette-Noire, "I forgot. There is a point we have not yet considered. I am charged with a most important message from your old enemy, King Grumbo, who is now anxious to obliterate all past unpleasantness by a family alliance. In short, he asks for his only son, Prince Egrillard, the hand of the Princess Joybell in marriage."

"In that case," said the King, "we'd better go on with the execution. Bid the headsman hold himself in readiness for official duty at eight forty-five to-morrow morning, sharp."

"Papa," Joybell exclaimed, "I won't have any husband but the one you first approved, and if he is to be killed, I will be killed with him."

"Houchette, my friend, we're in another fix," quoth the King.

"Do pray help us out of it."

"I have a strong suspicion," Lady Houchette said, with a smile, "that this mysterious stranger can do that very well himself, if he chooses. How say you, Sir Knight? Are you able and willing to solve this difficulty?"

"As your ladyship is a witch," was the reply of Sir Hippetoun, "I could not deceive you if I tried. You have no doubt already divined that I am Prince Egrillard, and that, being under a malignant spell, I have been wandering all over the world as the Knight of the Rueful Visage. But now the spell is removed." So saying, he squeezed the hand of the Princess.

"What do I hear," cries Blando, in a voice of deep emotion. "The son of our dear old friend Grumbo; and heir to the kingdom of the Disenchanted Isles? Come to our Royal Arms!" And the King embraced his son-in-law elect.

As Prince Egrillard had hastily explained, seeing that concealment was no longer possible or necessary, he had left his father's dominions under the baleful charm of sorcery, or something as bad, and had gone strolling hither and thither attended by his faithful Knight, Ralph du Grippou à Rotir, and his little foot-page. How it was that the Prince had become spell-bound, and had lapsed into the profoundest melancholy, I can only guess. It may have been through a severe course of reading in the comic literature of the Disenchanted Isles, which was remarkable in that age for its depressing inanity. Please to bear in mind that this happened a long while ago.

The tale is said. My Lords, Dames, Knights, and Squires of high and low degree, the author rises from his cane-seated chair, renders you courteous thanks for your goodly presence at his feast, drinks to you all in a loving cup, and bids you hearty welcome.

"A MORNING CALL."

It is *apropos* of our engraving bearing the above title that we propose to review, within the brief limits allotted to us, a few random recollections of some ten years ago, in days when the insane mania for betting and racing was at its height, and when the star of Harry Hastings was still in the ascendant, shining brightly out like an orb of the first magnitude from that brilliant constellation of plungers which illumined for so brief a space the firmament of the turf. In these times of sweeter manners, if not of purer laws in the racing world, we look back upon that cometary era with feelings of apprehension lest it should return once more to fright us from our propriety, to change the peaceful order of things, and to convulse the kingdom of sport. But while the fever was raging men recked not of danger, and the prodigal system of entries and enormous scale of betting operations were argued to be prosperous signs, and indicative of a golden age in the annals of the turf. Howbeit we commence the tale in the winter of "Hermit's year," when Derby books galore were open upon the great event, and when wicked apprentices and sporting shop-boys were at liberty to consult the lists of a score of ring leviathans, ere "Continental betting" had superseded quotations from the time-honoured marts at home in the clubs or at the Gate.

It was a jovial party which occupied that snug saloon carriage bound westwards on the bleakest of winter days, when London streets were "dumb with snow" and the piercing heralds of a heavier fall still to come swept meaningfully over a million of whitened roofs and shrieked through the airy fretwork of tower and steeple. Only the engine, like some huge teakettle, hissed cheerily as it stood awaiting the signal to start; and we "glode," as says the immortal Artemus, from the terminus sacred to the lavish and magnificent genius of Brunel, looking with its snow-capped domes and pendant ropes of icicles like the palace of the King of Frost itself.

We were a right merry company that December morning, and our voices rattled as fast as the iron tyres beneath us, as we sped onwards from the outskirts of the modern Babylon. Our prattle was naturally of the horse, horsey; and how could it be otherwise when "Argus," the raciest of racing writers, the most charming of *raconteurs*, and the "best of all good company," made us *au fait* with all the latest sayings and doings of "society," and mingled sporting lore with the little-tattle of the town. Then there was that most potent seigneur, proprietor and editor of a certain "Cornhill Magazine," not dressed in the orange garb of that eldest pioneer of monthly serials, but rather "in verdure clad," and dear to the souls of sportsmen, as Koran to the Mussulman's heart. Then there journeyed with us the very apple of the eye of *Bell's Life* himself, the oldest among the prophets, freighted with many a juicy Hibernian anecdote, and pouring forth a flood of memories connected with merry days of sport long since passed away. Frequent were the passages of arms between the fiery Celt and the learned Doctor opposite, sitting solemnly involved in some mysterious "upper Benjamin," like the robe of old Capys himself, and ever and anon delivering himself of oracular sayings touching the varieties of blood in the "Stud Book," and pausing now and again to anathematise the accursed house of Blacklock, and pronouncing sentence of excommunication against such an heretical strain from the pedigree tables of Derby winners and cup heroes. A few more kindred spirits lent their aid towards lightening the monotony of a Siberian expedition, and the entire *repertoire* of each was freely opened in turn for the benefit of the company, so that no branch of sport was left untouched; though conversation, taking frequent short flights into other departments of recreation, invariably settled once more upon the "high-mettled racer" and the scenes of which he formed the ever attractive centre.

What wonder, then, that the spire of Harrow, standing out in bold relief from her northern height, should flit past unnoticed as we were whirled across Hanwell Viaduct: or that the "antique towers" of her doughtiest rival upon the green sward, should fail to draw a casual glance from eyes bent only for a moment upon Windsor's hoary keep? Father Thames swirls along, yellow as Father Tiber beneath the walls of St. Angelo; and "Cliveden's proud alcove" gazes down upon his troubled bosom, from bare ruined choirs in place of that "summer crisp with shining woods," with which we are accustomed to associate the silver reach of river reflecting their glories so gallantly in the days of June. There are visions of "cattle huddled on the lea," of snug homesteads looking almost warmer for their garniture of nestling snow; of shepherds toiling slow behind their dusky charges along narrow lanes leading to the refuge of the fold; of figures of men and dogs treading the reedy margins of frozen watercourses; and of wains toiling painfully along open country roads leading across bleak tracts of down and wold. No random sunbeam finds its way through the leaden pall of clouds; only the oak plantation on yonder hillside gleams warm and ruddy with its store of foliage as yet unshaken by wintry winds, albeit, the "fiery finger" of autumn has long since marked them for his own. The red brick houses and chimneys of the town sacred to seeds and biscuits give a cheerful bit of colour to the scene; and we halt but for a moment in its backwoods settlement of log houses by courtesy called a station, but rush puffing away still "Westward ho!" under the range of hills, which trail their snowy chain, link by link, from the heights above Reading on our right unto their utmost rim beyond the classic Vale of White Horse—name dear alike to the heart of the hunter who skims its pastures below, as to the trainer who leads his team afield, in the blithe spring tide to catch the "bugle breezes" on Weathercock Hill.

Once with a foot upon that rolling grassy expanse, and ground as classic as that which held Greece captive at her Olympian games is before us, and there is not a ridge or spur of that breezy range but what recalls memories of triumph achieved by cunning masters in the art of training in what the touts are pleased to designate the "Berkshire districts." Hampshire and Wiltshire lay claim to a share in these broad velvety gallops, and their outposts are pushed well right to Danebury itself, which forms the connecting link between them and the "dark, untouted glades" of which "Our William" is tenant under the blameless Earl of Shaftesbury. In the year of our pilgrimage Sir Joseph was holding a strong hand at Kingsclere, with Blue Gown, Green Sleeves and Rosierucian, and master and trainer were halting among their opinions as to the best card to be played in May, though John Wells could not be shaken in his allegiance to Blue Gown. The ill-fated Franchise, sister to the "stallion" St. Albans, deluded not a few into the idea that Alec Taylor was to be amongst them once more with the Zingari colours of Lord Ailesbury, while Isley stood staunchly by the fortunes of Orion, and the followers of Merry kept watch over the tactics of the master of Russley in vain. For none of these celebrities, however, was intended our "morning call," and there was metal more attractive for us in the shape of Lord Lyon and Achievement, whose fame was ringing through all corners of the land, as the most distinguished members of that large family party sprung from old Paradigm, and destined for the "rouge et noir" devices on the shields of Sutton and Pearson. Bound for such a Mecca as this, who would not brave the long journey down, the icy draughts that unmercifully swept the Didoct platform, and ten miles of ice-bound road leading up yon bleak ridge to the coursers' home?

Such old world vehicles as might have disported themselves crazily over the London stones "ages ago," were destined to become our arks of safety across a frost-bound country, to the white-robed bases of the hills rising misty and ill-defined in the grey distance. The rooks marched boldly across interminable furrows in search of stray bits of sustenance here and there; the plough stood in middle field like some ice-bound ship, and high in air hovered a cloud of plover hesitating

where to alight in that weary land. Isolated thorn bushes, dotted here and there, with lichened trunks, and branches twisted like Gorgonic snakes, held their congregations of noisy fieldfares, stripping them of their ruddy burdens like a swarm of locusts, and then winging their way to the nearest covert for a night's shelter in its friendly thickets. A solitary hare, looking red as a fox against its snowy track, cantered gently down the plantation hedge, over and anon halting to reconnoitre the uncompromising situation, while under the lee of many a cornrick were gathered village urchins intent on snaring a member or two of the sparrow parliament holding noisy session under the protecting eaves. Rustic alehouses were all aglow within, and red-visaged, red-comforted yokels crowded to latticed windows to greet the passing wheels. Shepherd curs loafed mournfully about at cottage doors, with their occupation gone, and contrasting these piping times of peace with long days when flocks are to be penned in fleecy thousands at their Ilsley trysting-place in the jocund fair time, and envying the repose of their Corydons by the crackling ingles indoors. Well-known tracks were half obliterated, and only the straw-yards were rife with signs of comfort, the rugged steers looking mildly up from their midday meal, and Dobbin and Dolly exchanging quiet greetings from doors of box and barn.

Toiling up the slippery gradients of the hill, we came at last upon some vestiges of animal creation in the shape of a heavily sheeted string on their way homewards after a brisk morning's exercise on the straw bed. The lads clattered merrily along, glowing after their two hours of brisk cantering, and the weather-beaten trainer, with face ruddy as the cheek of a winter pippin, gravely brought up the rear on his rough pony. The straggling village was soon in sight, clustering round its square-built church, the tower of which, a landmark for miles around, has peeled forth its clanging welcome to many a winner returning victorious from hard fought fields. The very air of the place seemed impregnated with racing associations, evidenced by the well-to-do appearance of its thriving inhabitants, among whom the mothers pray not for fine bouncing boys, but for manikins of lesser growth, a stunted generation to be reared in a stable atmosphere, and to attain the height of their ambition by trying their 'prentice hands on the mysteries of the jockey boy's art. We called a halt at length at the gate of that trim cottage, with its long range of boxes facing southwards, and picturesque stable square, flanked by barns, and granary, and barracks for the army of lads in charge of the troop of stud thoroughbreds. The good-humoured face of James Dover bade us hearty welcome ere his cheery "good morning" fell upon our ears; and gladly we exchanged our cramped positions for a brisk turn and a "look round the place" before taking our departure for a visit to the "magic circle," not half a mile away, where the cynosures of: touting eyes at Ilsley were, in the argot of the wandering race of "professional horsewatchers," "restricted to healthy walking and trotting exercise on the straw bed." More than one of this industrious tribe did we encounter on our way, some proudly, defiantly greeting our cicerone with a "good morning," civilly returned, others slinking away like poachers at the keeper's approach.

A brave sight it was for us frozen-out sportsmen to come upon such a table spread in the desert as this glimpse of equine worth and excellence in its winter quarters. Many, nay, most of them were old friends well-known by sight, and as easily recognised in the mufti of private life, as when with shining coat, plaited manes, and plated hoofs, they waited the ominous summons of the saddling bell. There walked the schoolmaster, with a steady, business like aspect, and that genuine rough and ready air which bespoke high qualifications for his business, and a capability for picking up certain "unconsidered trifles" on his own account, when required to set an example to his pupils in "winning ways." The brown mare behind him had taken leave of her turf studies, and become a sort of parlour boarder until the days when she should be given in marriage to some highborn sultan of the stud, and should commence life anew in the character of a sober matron. She showed her heels skittishly ever and anon, as she had done to her five and thirty foemen up the Cambridgeshire hill two years since; and racing chronicles told of a brilliant, though chequered, two-year-old career in days when there were giants in the land. We needed not to be told about the white-legged hero who strode behind her.

"Still is thy name of high account,
And still thy deeds have charms."

Lord Lyon, King at Arms.

What he did, and how he did it, dwells as clear and bright in the memories of men now as in his "golden prime," and anecdote followed anecdote from his trainer's lips of many a stirring incident of inner life, uncare for by the outer world, but treasured up by those whose "heart is in their work" with fondest solicitude. With such rapt attention had we scanned the Lyon, as attention was directed to him by innumerable questions asked and answered, that we had bestowed little more than a casual notice on the wiry brown filly quietly tracking her brother's footsteps round the "silent highway" of the straw bed. A seemingly glorious career stretched in prospect before her, of highest success in the great Cup trophies of the year, of honourable retirement to nursing cares; while a long line of kings and queens sprung from the "peerless Achievement," filed before us down the shadowy vista of time. We recked not of training disappointments, nor of trouble early in life, nor of the black cloud descending prematurely upon brightest hopes. After feasting our eyes upon these two bright "particular stars" in the galaxy revolving round us, who could direct his attention to the lesser luminaries of that illustrious circle, albeit there were names amongst them not untrumpeted by fame, and worthy to join the retinue of a court over which brother and sister held such distinguished sway. Anon, we watched the "first lot" windleisurely down the hill on their homeward way, and the yearling contingent took their elders' places on the straw bed. A lot full of "fine animal spirits," but wild and turbulent as a pack of schoolboys breaking bounds, curvetting in most admired disorder round the limits of their playground, trying the temper of attendants in all sorts of provoking ways, heads down and heels up, rearing, plunging, and kicking, as the head lad sharply admonishes them, "all over the place." No peace until the sign was given to canter, when they entered with thorough enjoyment into the fun, sobering down after a few rounds of heavy going, to the semblance of a decorous, well-behaved set of youngsters, going sweetly and easily within themselves, and with no attempts at getting out of place. As they retired, the "casuals" came up for an hour's walking and trotting, and we followed home the yearling string, the history and breeding of each being given and canvassed, and their various prospects and engagements discussed.

We have always found the genius of hospitality especially revered by professors of the trainer's art, whosoever our footsteps have strayed in search of information connected with their charges, and our welcome at Ilsley will always be cherished in grateful remembrance of pleasant hours spent among objects nearest to our heart. Many of our readers will be familiar with our photograph of an interior of one of the chief training homes of England. An old-fashioned, yet cosy habitation, defying the wintry blasts that whistle round that bleak range of billowy downland, erst the heritage of some yeoman farmer, whose flocks strayed far and wide over the most elastic turf in the world, as yet undinted by the racer's hoof, and the favourite resort of many a rare bird and insect in days ere the sheeted string defiled across the breezy expanse. A low-pitched, but well-lighted room, with massive beams crossing the ceiling, and with all sorts of nooks and corners, made more for comfort than for show. "Family portraits" in the shape of cracks of past and present days from the studios of Herring or Hall looking down from the walls in contemplative mood, or galloping out of their frames; many a gift, proudly displayed, from patrons of every rank in racing life, presented in remembrance of professional services faithfully and honourably rendered; sketches of racing celebrities, from the silhouette of antique fashion to the most delicately finished photograph recorded by the sun. A bull-terrier, with pedigree well nigh as lengthy as the "Lyon's," and worthy of his place of rest before the log-piled fire, crackling and flickering from a grate such as bespoke from its ample dimensions the capacity of its owner's heart. Linen spotless as family tree of Achievement, covering a table garnished well with that solid yet toothsome fare, for which the keen frosty air has amply whetted our cockney appetites.

Still more talk of horses; coming round as before to the old point, from different diversions in other directions of sport, hunting, shooting, coursing, a brief touch upon politics, a whisper of finance, an allusion to the "state of trade"—all such leading up by short cuts to the ever

engrossing topics of "Calendar" and "Stud Book" lore. With the after dinner weed came the half dismal half pleasant reflection, that there was but an hour's daylight left in which to look over the horses in their boxes and renew the acquaintance of the friends we first interviewed upon the straw bed. The groom of the chambers tapped his signal at the window, and once more we were in marching order and prepared to "go the rounds" with our obliging cicerone. Long and fondly we lingered over the "Paradigm brood," but longest of all over the Lyon and his sister, until we had mentally inscribed upon the tablets of our memory the form, lineaments, and character of each. Then bidding adieu to these right trusty and well-tried champions of the stable, we were summoned to a second and more careful inspection of the yearling ranks, industriously endeavouring to discover Derby winners in embryo, and in imagination assigning to each his destination upon the stage of the great Turf theatre, arguing much from their pedigrees, but more from their appearance and action. The prospects of all are bright and flowery enough before those "days of trial" in dark December, when the "lot" are sifted for the first time and but too few grains of wheat are discovered among the chaff. Then troubles begin in earnest, and examinations among the tyros themselves or with some "upper form" boy as their trial nag, take place in everlasting succession. So they rise to eminence each in his particular line of life, as stayer or sprinter, or are drafted as "useless for racing purposes," and, descending in the social scale, find their level as humble servants of mankind at last.

So long have we tarried in our round of visits, that twilight comes mistily down upon "hamlet and hall," and silence wraps the lonely hills, save where the sheep-bell tinkles dreamily in the distance, and the rook flapping leisurely homewards caws his last good night. Parting was sweet sorrow indeed that bleak chilly evening, but we made the most of that pleasant hour before our final leave-taking, and improved it to the best of our ability by the never-failing resource of what a genial fellow-labourer in the field of sport has described as a "little horse talk." Men have laid their heads together around blazing firesides over more recondite topics than this, but we cannot all be saints and philosophers, and like Sam Weller and his fellow-servants before the famous trial, we must "get talking about" things nearest to our thoughts. Religious subjects and political economy must be considered out of place in a trainer's parlour, where Jeremy Taylor and Jeremy Bentham have to give place, of course only for the nonce, to John Scott and Sam Chifney, and where the sayings and doings of those immemorial queer characters which have left their mark upon the history of a national sport form the staple of conversation. We listened to the teaching of lessons resulting from the long experience of a trainer's life, and learnt how vastly disproportionate were the brilliant successes so unduly exaggerated by common report to the long list of dismal failures and disappointments of which the outside world knows nothing. We fathomed the truth of the many rumours flying abroad and creeping into print anent the inner life of Derby favourites, and we realised the truth of the ancient adage that truth is stranger than fiction. The curtain of mystery which is popularly supposed to surround the calling of a trainer was pulled aside, and an insight afforded to us into the sober commonplaces of a business demanding to the full as much zeal, intelligence, and industry as that of an ordinary mortal, and not one whit more munificently rewarded.

At last our Jehus sent in respectful messages that they could guarantee our safe delivery at Didcot in time for the up express no longer, and with a round of thanks to our cheery host (who offered us all a snug box for the night and feed of corn in the morning), we reluctantly made tracks on the return journey. A solitary star glistened faintly here and there through rifts in fleecy clouds, and our wheels rattled loud on the crisp roads, over which frost had once again asserted his dominion. One by one voices which had sustained the lessening flow of conversation from the hour of our departure dropped into meditative silence, and unmistakable signs of blessed sleep arose from carriage corners, where dreamers dozed uneasily, waking up with fitful starts when we pulled up to unskid, or when some invidious stone marred the even tenor of our way. Like the sleeping grooms of Macbeth, we were uneasy in our dreams, and strange incoherent sentences struggled from our lips as we restlessly shifted our cramped positions, and composed ourselves once more for sleep. One seemed to be assisting at Epsom or Doncaster revels, and would mutter that "Lord Lyon's beast," only to awake to the conviction that the gallant bay, like King Arthur, had "come again and twice as fair," until we were unconsciously hurried through driving sleet to the shelter of our friendly "saloon," and felt ourselves suddenly "tacked on" to some moving body, which glided away out into the darkness and charmed our senses to sleep once more. The sweet exposition of that beneficent restorer of nature stole over us to our journey's end, and the peremptory demand for "tickets" broke gratefully upon "tired eyelids, tired eyes," and soon we were whirling over the stones to our various destinations in the great heart of England, tired in head and limb, but with the sweet satisfaction of having earned a night's repose through the changes and chances of travel attendant on our "morning call."

AMPHION.

A HUNT FOR A CHRISTMAS DINNER.

In our stout whaler, the *Borealis*, we had sailed without accident up the east coast of Davis Strait, and had reached its north-east corner, where stands the "Devil's Thumb," a remarkable rock rising sheer out of the sea to a vast height, and standing like the guardian of the dreaded Melville Bay, that "hiatus maxime defendendus," which must be crossed before the North-west Water can be reached. Our object was to get round to Pond's Bay where whales most do congregate. But scarcely a year passes without heavy toll being claimed by Melville Bay in the shape of ships smashed to pieces. And it is on record that in one year she was so inexorable as to demand and complete the destruction of twenty-one large and costly ships. It fell to the lot of our vessel to be selected along with four others to be destroyed and swallowed up by this Minotaur of the North. The process of destruction was in this wise. While threading our way through a labyrinth of "lanes of water," between numberless floes and scones of ice, and when we had safely accomplished nearly half of the forty miles of danger, suddenly the wind changed to the S.W. and blew with resistless force the loose ice of the Strait up against the "land ice." We had barely time to cut a dock in the ice (which was about six feet thick) and had hauled our ship along with another, stern foremost into it with bows pointing to the advancing floes, when the irresistible crush came on. The floe in which we were docked was quickly broken and overlapped by masses of ice. Our crews hurriedly hoisted out sea chests, sledges, tents, boats, and provisions, hauled them several hundred yards astern of the ships, and proceeded to erect the tents and make coffee with perfect nonchalance, as if quite accustomed to this kind of thing. We watched three other ships in an ice-dock about a mile from ourselves disappear one after another. Our ship made a stout resistance and managed to haul out into a "hole of water," but the ice soon closed round her and crushed her to pieces.

It now became necessary to find our way with the crews of the other wrecked vessels to the Danish settlements about 600 miles off. To accomplish this, we had to haul our boats and sledges laboriously over the ice, and set our sails when we came to water. The myriads of roaches, auks, eider-ducks, &c., which we found on the east coast, furnished us with ample provender.

Arrived at Upernivik, we found that the last Danish ship of the season had left for home, so that there was nothing for it but to winter there. The hardships of wintering in the Arctic Circle are by no means so great as is generally supposed. The Esquimaux are excellent sportsmen, and delight in showing their adroitness to Europeans, so that many a good day's sport we had, with the thermometer *always* in the shade, and often 30° or more below zero. On one occasion, and that was Christmas Eve, a select party sallied forth under the bright gleam of the Aurora Borealis, with the object of finding something substantial for the celebration of our Christmas feast. We had not gone many miles when we came upon a stray reindeer, which was quickly bagged, but our surprise was great when from behind a hummock appeared a huge bear with two cubs. The bear had evidently been baulked of his prey, and stood up on his hind legs, eyeing us, and sniffing the air. He was quickly brought down, and the cubs were easily bagged. The bear's paw, when well cooked, is counted

a delicacy in the Arctic Regions, and the cubs are tender as venison in the best condition, so that, what with venison, bear, cubs, and roaches, our Christmas table was well supplied.

As a charming change from the hackneyed sports of southern countries, we strongly recommend a trip to the far north, where the wildest sport can be enjoyed amid its grandest associations.

PEEVER'S HOLE.

BY R. B. WORMALD.

It wanted just a week to Christmas. I, Edward Maitland, barrister by profession,—with more profession than practice—was sitting in my lonely chambers in the Temple, before a cheerless fire, pondering where I should bestow myself this Christmas-tide. There was my elder brother John—I knew I should be welcome at John's place in Norfolk; but John, though a good fellow at heart, was somewhat humdrum in his ways, and after dinner his talk was of beeves, sub-soil drainage, chemical manures, rotation of crops, and other matters connected with "high farming," which invariably sent me off to sleep. Besides, the birds were always 'as wild as hawks at Christmas time. As for my Aunt Margaret's invitation, which came three weeks ago, that was out of the question. It was true Aunt Margaret had money, and a well-stocked cellar, but she was never particularly lavish of either, so far as I was concerned—and tobacco was an abomination in her eyes. Moreover, I had a too vivid recollection of my last Christmas visit—when I was condemned to play long whist for penny points, with two old maiden ladies, and an old wreck of a sea captain, with a wooden leg and an ear-trumpet, for three mortal hours every night of my stay. No, of the two, John certainly for choice, if only as the lesser.—At this moment there was a sharp "rat-tat" at my door—and a letter was put into my hands. It was in the once familiar handwriting of my old college chum, George Halliday, whom I had not seen, and scarcely heard of, for the last three years. His career had been a curious one. The son of a Yorkshire parson, not over-burdened with the world's goods—he was educated for the church, but early manifested a rooted disinclination for the "cloth," and on leaving college essayed to get his living by his wits. His first venture was an investment of a little money left him by his mother, in the purchase of a miraculous patent, which was to return ever so many thousand per cent.; on the strength of which he started a sumptuously furnished office in a street leading out of the Strand; but the profits of the business I am afraid never sufficed to defray the cost of the resplendent brass plate that ornamented the outer door. He then tried his hand at journalism, and with the aid of three or four kindred spirits, started on co-operative principles the *Daily Flasher*, which it will be remembered, came into the world with such a flourish of trumpets, and after a struggling existence of a few weeks, died of inanition and the rapacity of a stony-hearted paper-maker. After this I heard of him trying an infallible martingale at Baden-Baden, which I believe realised all the inventor's most sanguine hopes for three days, but on the fourth collapsed hopelessly, owing, so he said, to an utterly unforeseen and unprecedented run of the red, when he was just on the point of making a fortune. A short career on the turf followed, but this proved the most unprofitable venture of all, and after a most disastrous settling day, he exchanged it for the position of an under-master in a small country grammar school—a post he did not long retain, owing to a difference of opinion with the head-master, in which a ruler played a prominent part. After this he was lost sight of for a couple of years, during the greater part of which period it was currently rumoured among his friends that he was acting as "penny-a-liner" to an obscure newspaper in New York, at the remunerative salary of seven dollars a week. Then all of a sudden fortune, who had hitherto persistently frowned on all his undertakings, veered round like a weather-cock. A rich old uncle, on his mother's side, with whom he had hopelessly quarrelled, and who had never spoken to, or even seen his scapegrace nephew for years, whom he had always vowed to cut off with a shilling, died one fine morning without a will, and George Halliday, to his own astonishment, found himself heir to a handsome fortune, and the snug estate situated on the West Coast of Cornwall.

His letter to me was dated from Trefair Court, in that county, and contained a pressing invitation—couched in his old, frank, cheery manner, to come and spend Christmas there, and refusing to take any denial. "So come along at once, old fellow," he wrote. "It's a dreary out-of-the-way place, I know; but there's plenty of wild-fowl shooting, and we've got a few jolly neighbours, and will try and make it as lively for you as possible." * * *

Would I?—Wouldn't I!—To see old Halliday again would alone be worth the journey; so I dispatched a hasty acceptance of his invitation by that night's post, and the next morning but one found me rattling away by the Great Western for the wilds of Cornwall.

I need not enter into particulars of an uneventful journey. Suffice it to say, that after some ten or eleven hours' travelling I was deposited at the roadside station of P—, where a cheery greeting and a cordial grasp of the hand, reminding me instinctively of old times,—announced my old chum Halliday.

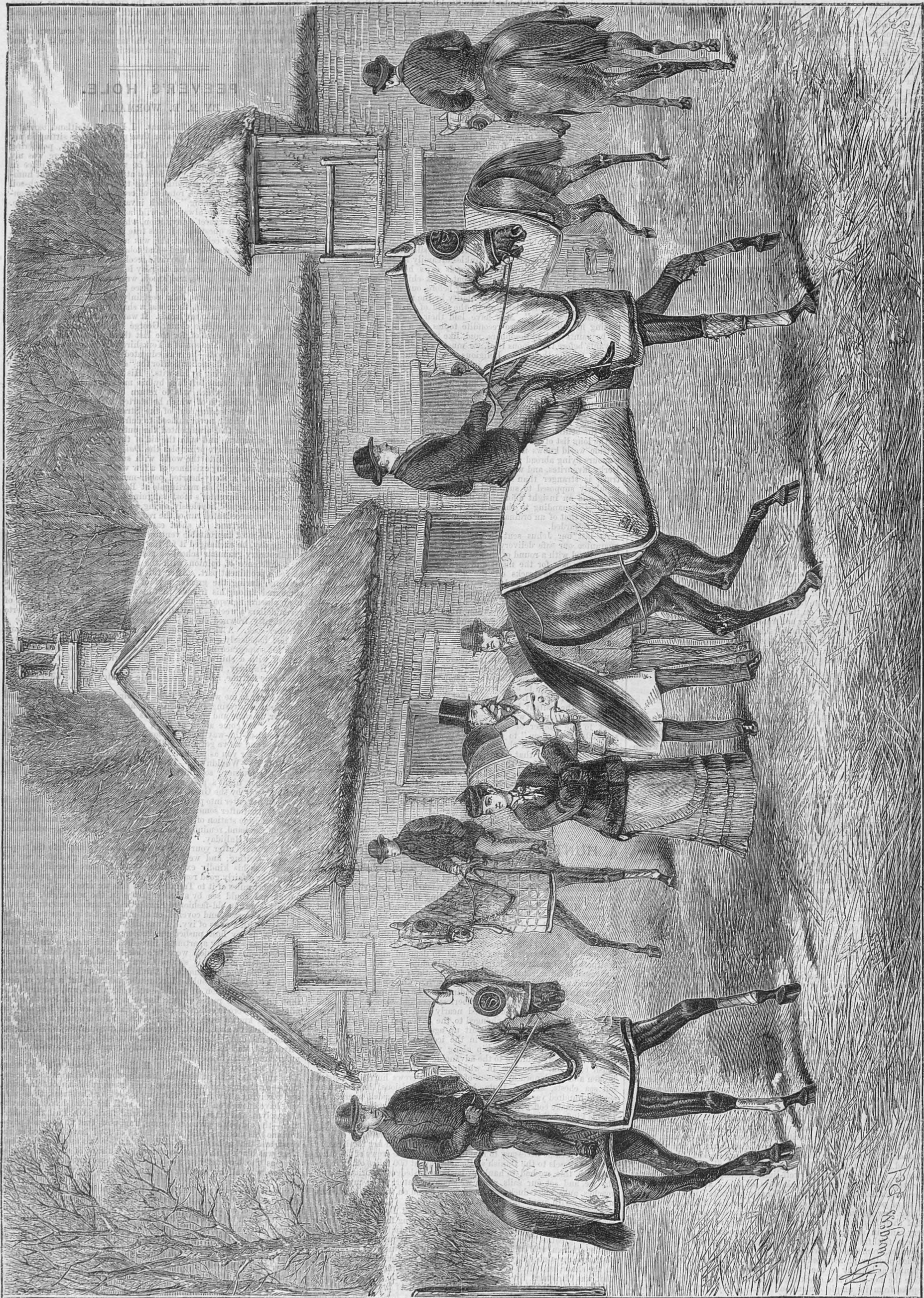
"Look sharp after your luggage, old man, and jump into the trap—supper's waiting, and we've seven good miles to go before we get home," was his kindly exhortation—and we were speedily bowling along over a fairly good road for Cornwall, at a speed that promised to make short miles of it to Trefair Court. As we drove up to the main entrance, I could see by a hasty glance in the moonlight, that the "Court" was an old-fashioned Elizabethan mansion, surrounded by a lofty stone terrace, and covered, on at any rate the greater part of the frontage, with a mass of ivy. I was allowed scant time for inspection, however, as my host pushed me indoors and led the way into the dining room—a lofty apartment furnished with massive antique oak. The occupants of which were two fair-haired girls whom Halliday introduced to me as his sisters Clara and Ellen. A more lovely creature than the first named I think I never saw. Shall I describe her? I cannot if I would. I remember nothing but a pair of deep blue eyes—a profusion of golden—red golden hair, and a sunny smile that might have rested on the lips of a goddess. In less than five minutes we were excellent friends, and chatting away as familiarly as if we had known each other for years. In due course a substantial supper made its appearance, to which I did ample justice after my long journey and drive—upon the conclusion of which pipes and grog were introduced, and as we gathered cozily round the fire to-morrow's programme came in for discussion.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Halliday, "to-morrow's Christmas Eve, and what with putting the finishing touches to the church decorations—arranging the misletoe and other green rubbish about the house, and receiving a few friends whom we expect for Christmas, these girls will have enough on their hands; so we'll let them have the day to themselves, and take a turn after the wild fowl. Old Phil, the fisherman—the old boy's given up smuggling, now that it does not pay—told me this morning that whole flocks of fowl have alighted on the coast, and that as he sailed past Peever's Hole this morning the whole place was black with ducks—a sure sign, he says, of a storm. But so long as the barometer stands as it does," continued my host "the old boy, with all his weather wisdom, will have to wait a bit for his gale."

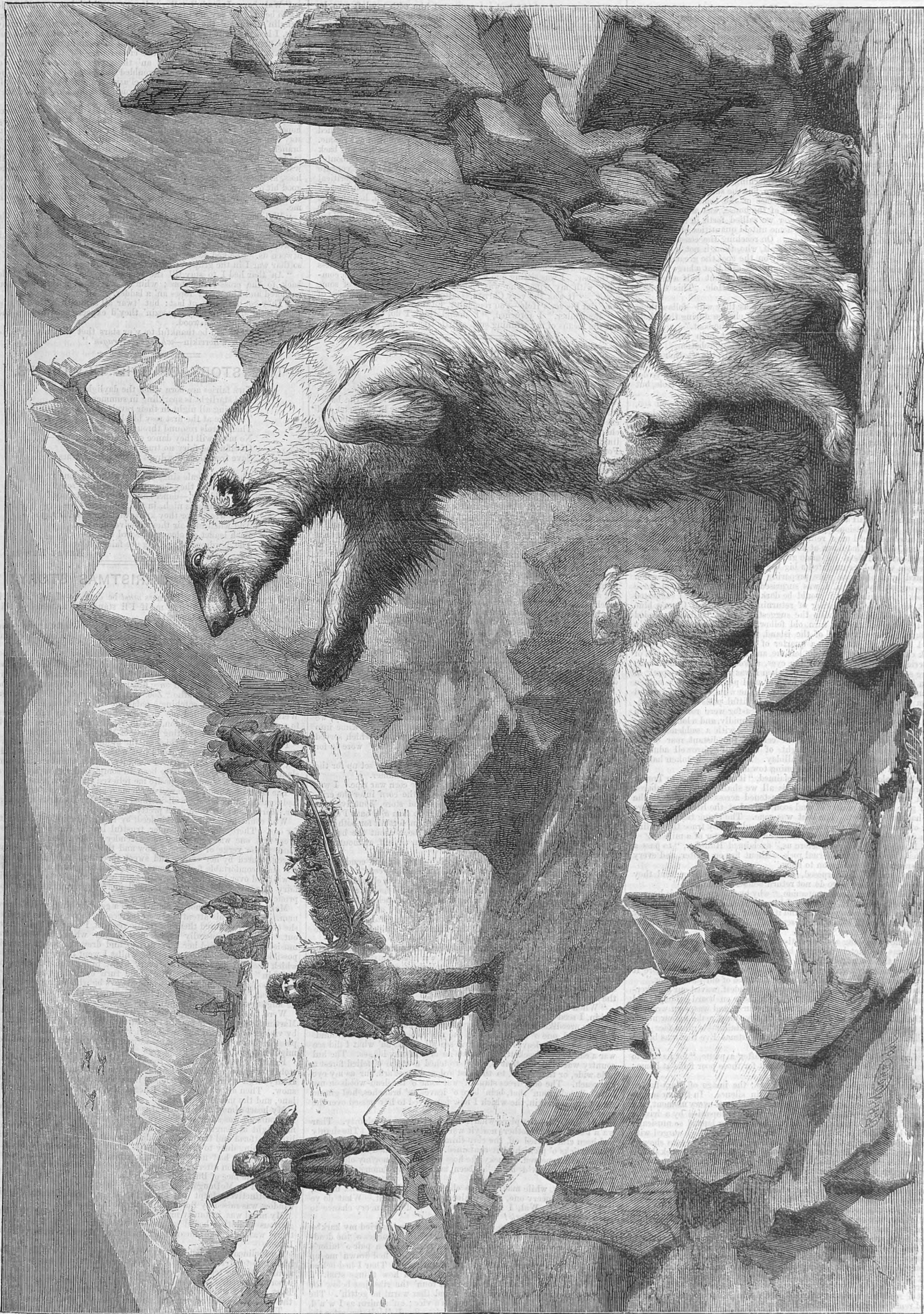
"Well he's generally right in his prognostications," interposed Clara, with whom Phil, it appeared, was a prime favourite.

"Right! of course he must be right now and then," returned Halliday, "but I'll back Admiral Fitzroy's barometer against him this time. We shall have no storm this week, at any rate, if I know anything about weather signs." Then after a pause he resumed. "I'll tell you what we'll do, Maitland; if the weather holds until to-morrow, we'll take the boat and make a trip to the Peever's Hole, why 'Hole' I never knew, because it's an island, or rather islet some two hundred acres in extent, lying about two miles off, and such a place for ducks, old boy."

Against this proposition his sister resolutely set her face. "Oh please, George," she urged, "do not think of going to that horrid dangerous place. I never like to hear of your going in summer, and in winter it is ten times worse. The least wind raises a dreadful surf in that narrow channel; you remember how that crew of poor fishermen were swept away only last Christmas in attempting to cross, and how years ago the old shepherd and his wife and family, the last



CHRISTMAS WITH THE STUD.—"A MORNING CALL."—DRAWN BY J. STURGES.



CHRISTMAS AT THE NORTH POLE—"A HUNT FOR A DINNER."—DRAWN BY R. H. MOORE.

people who ever lived on Peever's Hole were washed away by that terribly high tide, and nothing was ever seen of them again."

"Yes," responded her brother, laughing, "but that 'terribly high tide' you speak of, took place so very many years ago, that I am beginning to think that both it and the traditional 'old shepherd' were myths, that only existed in the frightened fancies of the old women hereabouts, like the story the country-folks tell of the yellow-haired mermaid who fell so desperately in love with the young smuggler, and—"

"But, to please me," interrupted Clara, "do not go. Do try and persuade him, Mr. Maitland."

"Well, well," laughed Halliday, "if my little girl will have it we shall all be drowned, we'll be good boys and stay ashore—or at any rate won't go until we see what the weather's like in the morning."

With this compromise the conversation was turned into another channel, and resulted, as all conversation round a fireside of an evening will—in the long run—in candles being brought, and a general adjournment to rest.

As Halliday had predicted, the next morning broke beautifully fine. A slight hoar frost just silvered the lawn, but the sun shone out bright and warm for December, and the surface of the inlet of sea, which flowed up to almost within gunshot of the house, was as smooth as a mirror. Directly breakfast was over we sallied forth in high spirits, and with many promises to bring home untold quantities of ducks for the benefit of the household larder. On reaching the coast we found old Phil, a fine weather-beaten old salt, who, though not a Cornishman by birth, had lived man and boy on the spot the greater part of his life, who, in reply to my friend's inquiries, said that a large flight of wild geese had just got up from the mainland about half a mile off, and he had marked them down on Peever's Hole. This decided Halliday.

"Come," he said, "the girls may croak as they will—follow them we must. We may never get such another chance during the whole of your stay. Here, Phil, bear a hand to launch the boat."

The old fisherman complied, but I could not help thinking, or perhaps fancying, that his face wore a look of disapprobation.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "I'll not say, sir, the weather is not right enough now, but there's a storm a-coming. I'll not say it'll be to-day or to-morrow, but it's sure—ly a-coming. But whatever ye do, sir, if ye see the wind drawing out westerly, don't stop at the Hole, but put back at once."

"All right," responded Halliday, adding with a laugh, "you see, Phil, if the storm does not come to-day or to-morrow, it won't do us much harm, as to-morrow's Christmas-day, and the next day's Sunday; besides we mean to be back before sunset."

And so saying he stepped into the boat, followed by myself and Caesar, a favourite retriever, and in a few minutes we were bowling merrily across the ebb-tide before a light breeze for Peever's Hole. In less than half an hour we had arrived at our destination, and having made fast our boat, proceeded without loss of time to "business." Halliday was right. The wild fowl appeared to be innumerable, they literally covered the place, and a more glorious day's sport I never dreamed of in my wildest flights of fancy. The island was small, though not so small as Halliday had described it, and consisted wholly of rock, with occasional patches of slippery grass, and the birds for some reason seemed most reluctant to leave it. If we put them up at one end, they settled down at the other, so that we could easily mark them down, and shoot the same ground two or three times over. By luncheon we had accumulated a big bag, and after a short rest, supplemented by a pipe, we were preparing to make a fresh start, when glancing at my watch, I was surprised to find it close upon three o'clock. Knowing that it would be dark in another hour, I suggested that we should be thinking of returning—I wonder if Clara's blue eyes had anything to do with the suggestion?—but Halliday pleaded hard "for just another turn, old fellow," and said he would merely walk up as far as the end of the island, where he had marked some fowl down, and join me in a quarter of an hour. I sat down on a rock close to the spot where he left me, and I suppose fell into a sort of reverie, in which briefs and blue eyes, a woolsack and golden hair, were somehow mixed up together, when I was startled by a speck of rain falling on my face, and on looking up I perceived that a sudden change had taken place in the weather. The wind had backed round from north-east, and was now blowing in fitful puffs from the westward, while huge cloud-like wreaths of sea-fog were rolling in from the same quarter. The tide too was rising rapidly, and a long ominous swell was rolling on the rock-bound beach with a saddened moan that sounded in my ears like the echo of the distant roar of the Atlantic. Instinctively I thought of old Phil's farewell admonition, and hastened in quest of Halliday. I had scarcely taken half-a-dozen steps when I saw him hastening towards me.

"Come along, old boy," he exclaimed, "if we get over to Trefair before the storm overtakes us, it is all we shall do." Enumbered with our game-bag and guns, we hastened across the island at the best pace we were master of, and soon arrived at the little cove where we had left our boat. The boat was gone. The rising tide had lifted her off, and through the gathering fog I could dimly trace the outline of a dark object drifting down channel a good quarter of a mile off.

"Here's a nice prospect before us," exclaimed Halliday, "to pass a winter's night on this infernal rock, without fire or shelter, and every appearance of its coming on to blow."

"But, surely," I interposed, "Phil knows we are here, and they will send assistance if we do not return before nightfall."

"Phil!" returned my companion, "why by this time Phil is heaven knows how far away, pilchard fishing. At the best he would not return until to-morrow morning, and if caught in this storm will probably be driven to put in somewhere a score of miles off, and it's long odds if he's back again before Sunday."

Here he gazed long and earnestly in the direction of the mainland, which was completely obscured by the sea fog. "Surely," he continued, "there's a fishing-lugger standing away off the headland. They've evidently seen the storm brewing, and are running before it for the bay for shelter. There is just a chance of our hailing her."

But it was all in vain. We shouted our loudest, waved our handkerchiefs, and fired our guns as signals, but those on board evidently did not see us, and the lugger held on her course, and was soon wrapped in the gathering gloom. I now felt that we must make up our minds for the worst; and thought that I read in Halliday's glum face how little he relished the prospect of the Christmas Eve that was before him. But I was mistaken.

"I wouldn't care a straw," he said after a pause, "for having to camp out in this dog's hole, if it was not for those poor folks at home; they'll be miserable about us."

The same thought had occurred to me; the image of Clara floated before my eyes, and we sat some time in silence. In the meantime the storm was brewing apace. The wind freshened every moment, and came in sudden gusts, piercingly cold, and accompanied by a driving sleet. The mimic wavelets which in the morning lapped so musically on the beach, had now changed into huge breakers, which surged with a roar of thunder on the boulders, and dashed themselves into showers of spray. Meanwhile the rapidly advancing tide drove us to seek shelter on a piece of rocky ground abutting on the beach, and elevated some six or seven feet above the ordinary high-water level. Not an agreeable place to pass a stormy Christmas Eve, but here at least it seemed we were safe from the raging waters, whose snow-white crests gleamed with a weird phosphorescent light, as they reared up against our place of refuge. Dark as it was gradually growing, I could see plainly that the little eminence on which we stood was soon the only portion of the island that was not submerged, and that worse than all, the tide driven by this fierce westerly gale, was momentarily invading the narrow strip of rock that formed our sanctuary. Foot by foot it came up, until it washed over our feet and then rose up to our knees—the current every moment rendering our footing more precarious, and the icy cold chilling us to the very marrow. Halliday spoke to me, but his words were drowned by the howling of the wind and the roar of the waves, but I read his meaning only too plainly in his face. How long we had remained in this position I know not—it seemed hours, though I suppose the time might have been measured by minutes. Still the hungry waters advanced, and as they rose almost to the bottom of our waistcoats, we clung together for support, the tide swaying us backwards and forwards, and threatening every moment to sweep us off our feet. I motioned to Halliday to thrust the muzzle of his gun into the ground—so as to enable him to keep his footing a moment longer, but he was too weak and frozen to move his arm, and it was plain that he was

failing fast—indeed if I had not supported him with my left arm, he must have fallen. It was little support that I had to give, for a feeling of dizziness and languor was now stealing over me, and the howl of our poor dog who had at last been washed off his feet and was now being carried away by the current, sounded in my ears like my death-knell. I have but a dim indistinct recollection of what followed—Halliday had lost consciousness, I was holding or striving to hold him up with one arm; a deadly chill was creeping up to my heart—a sensation of a hopeless void, an endless descent down an unfathomable abyss; a dreamy sound of strange voices—and a sudden flash of light—then utter darkness!

When I awoke it was in a strange room. At first I was not permitted to ask any questions, or even to speak; but as I gained consciousness and strength, I learned the full particulars of our rescue. It appears that Phil, not liking the look of the weather, had put back from his fishing trip, and gave the information as to our whereabouts; but at that time the storm was at its height, and no boat dared venture to our assistance from the mainland. Providentially, at this critical moment, a steam-tug, bound from Falmouth to Bristol, was driven by stress of weather into the bay for shelter, and her captain, hearing the circumstances, put out in quest of us. As my readers know, he arrived just in time to save us from a watery grave. Halliday recovered—but very slowly—and during his illness, he insisted on my remaining a guest at Trefair Court, to keep, as he said, himself and sisters company.

Three years had elapsed. The woolsack was as far distant as ever; but briefs were coming in, and for a junior, I was doing a fair business at the bar. I was sitting one winter's evening by my fireside in company with my wife, who was endeavouring to fix the date of some event. "It was the very Christmas after that terrible adventure of your's at Peever's Hole—you remember, Edward."

"Remember," I returned, "I should think I do, Clara. Was it not the means of my winning such a little treasure as yourself?"

UP IN THE AIR.

A SQUATTER'S ADVENTURE.

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

THE tornado, or hurricane of the Far West—"herrikin" the back-woodsmen call it—is a species of tempest very similar in character and effects to the typhoons and cyclones of the Far East. One of its most characteristic peculiarities is, that it generally sweeps over a very limited tract of country, a mere strip of only a mile or so in width. Fortunate its being thus confined; for within that strip or belt its action is fearfully destructive, and the forest, that chances to stand in its way, goes down before its breath, as if the trees were so many stalks of grass yielding to the blade of the scythe. Houses are prostrated in a like manner, and wooden ones are often carried for a mile's distance from their ancient sites, or deposited on the tops of trees. Towns have suffered almost complete annihilation, as was the case with Natchez on the Mississippi some thirty years ago.

In traversing the Western State it is not unusual to come across the track of a tornado. If it be in a timbered district the trees will be seen all down, their tops turned in the same direction, the roots torn up from the ground, each carrying a high, circular mass of the surface earth which adheres to their network of fibres. This belt of prostrated timber is sometimes only a few hundred yards in width, the hurricane seeming to have shot through it like a bolt, leaving the trees on each side standing and untouched. Sometimes the line, or column, of destruction is much wider; but in most cases with a well-defined boundary, outside of which Nature remains calm and unseathed. Woe to the wayfarer—be he hunter or traveller—who chanced to be caught in a "herrikin" when it passes in its Cyclopean strength!

The effects of such storms are often of the most eccentric kind. There is a well-authenticated instance of a barn door fowl, a "rooster," having been stripped bare of his feathers, standing tail towards the tempest, when it struck him—chanticleer escaping without any further damage!

The results, however, are rarely of this ludicrous character, but oftener of a serious and tragical nature, scores of lives being lost in the track of a tornado. Escapes of a very singular kind frequently occur—real "hair-breadth 'scapes," one of which, a little comical in its way, we shall here record. It befell an old Arkansas squatter who came into our hunter's camp and "took his turn" at the "yarns," which served to knit us all together every evening when "all hands" were in for the night. He thus gave his narrative.

"I'd made 'bout a acre o' claim, an' had got a shanty set up for the ole woman an' myself on the edge o' the standin' timber."

"It war in the fall sezun o' the year, an' the corn war ripe. I war all alone by myself potterin' about, an' totin' the corn inter the crib. The ole gal had gone that day to the cross-road store, 'bout five mile off, to git some grocery-fixins in change for the skin o' a baar I'd shot the week afore. She had the ole hoss w' her, an' fort'nit for both them critters they war away. Hed eiyher o' 'em been about the house I reckon they'd 'a' been blown sky-high, as I war myself, an' moutn't 'a' kum down so safe as I did."

"I war down by the eend o' the cl'arin'—that air the eend furest away from the shanty. I war busy pickin' off the yeers o' corn an' chuckin' them inter a basket, an' didn't notice ne'er a cloud in the sky till all at once it sud'ntly darkened over, as if night had kum on three hours afore its time. I hedn't a moment to make spekalashuns 'bout what it ked mean; when thar kim sich a whizzin', an' sreekin', an' crackin', an' crashin' as ef General Jackson w' his hul army—hoss, fut an' cannons—war pursuin' the Cherokee Injuns through the woods."

"I kedn't give the ghost o' a guess what war up, nor hed I any time for conjecturin'. Afore I ked count ten I war heisted myself—right up into the air, as ef I'd sud'denly been supplied w' a pair o' wings, an' flyin' like a egle. I know'd I war up in the air, but only for the shortest space o' time. Then all at once I didn't know whar I was; the senses war knocked clean out o' me."

"When I rekiwer'd them, which I did arter somethin' like a hour I reckon, I seed I war up in a tree; but, boys, prechaps in the most keurous predicament any man ever war in among tree-tops. It war a dead-wood, one o' them I girdled the year afore cl'arin' the ground. As thar warnt no leaves on it, I ked see all about, an' what I did see war a caution to Crockett. Thar war no cl'arin' any longer. The hul country war cl'arin'—that is, thar stretched a stripe o' felled forest a mile wide, or thar about, to the east'ard and west'ard, fur as my eye ked reach. The only trees stannin' war some o' the dead-woods on my bit o' cl'ared ground 'thet, bein' bare o' leaves an' branches, hed gin no grup to the herrikin, the which I now perceiveed to hev passed over the spot."

"I looked torst the place whar I expected to see my shanty. Thar wa'n't one log on another, nor yit war thar a log in sight. The shanty hed been clur carried off, the clay chimbley along w' it, an' wuss still, all the sticks o' plenishin' it contained. The hoss-shed and corn-crib hed alser disappeared. Lucky the hoss wa'n't thar, nor my ole woman neyther, else they'd both 'a' been switcht up 'mong the flyin' furniter."

"Wal, boys, while makin' these observashuns I war in a fix meself, an' a durned query one, as I've already gi'n ye a hint. What do ye serpose it war? Wal, I needn't wait, for ye'd hev neery chance to guess. I war in a fork!"

"It war thuswise. The blast hed tuk me up an' carried my karkiss till it kim in contact w' one o' the outstitchin' branches o' the dead-wood. This branch hed two times to it, partin' like a pair o' tailor's sheers jest a leetle ways open. The puff o' wind hed drawn me up atween the two prongs, 'most splittin' them apart. 'Thar I hed bekim wedged. When I rekiwered my senses, I seed how things stud. I war grupped by the twin branches right roun' the ribs, jest below the armpits, an' out o' that fix I soon found thar warnt no gettin'. The crotch kep' me as tight as if I'd been in a vice; an' squirm as I w'd, 'twar plainly onpossible to get clear o' it. So, I didn't try arter the fust wriggle or two; for I seed it w'd be a right dangerous bizness. The limb wa'n't over-thick; an' as the sap war gone out o' it, I seed thar war a possibility o' its snappin' right off an' precipitin' me to the groun', not less'n thirty feet below. Whenever I made a move it wobbled about more than feeled comfortable, so I made up my mind to keep still. I hed to do that, for thur was no other way."

"Wal, boys, I needn't tell ye, it war anythin' but a comfortable fix to be in. To say nothin' o' the unpleasant position, w' my legs danglin' down, an' the hard dead-wood branches squeezin' ag'in my ribs, I hed the thort to trouble me thet I mout niver git releaved out o' the predicament. The ole 'oman mout 'a' been in the track o' the herrikin, on her way back from the cross-roads—for it hed kim that way—an' if so, she an' the hoss an' the grocery-fixins, whar w'd they be now? Thar war what troubled an' purplexed me. If she didn't come back, who w'd? The cl'arin war out o' the way o' all traffic. It mout be weeks afore anyone 'u'd be strayin' in thet directshun."

"Take my word for't, boys, I war in a' ugly fix, an' as the hours passed, I feeled skeerier and skeerier. I had jest begun to gi'e up hope, thinkin' I must stay up thar till I breathed my last, an' then stay like a 'possum thet's been shot an' still clings w' its tail to a branch. I may say I'd gi'n up hope, when I hearn a screech thet made the blood run fresh and sweet through every vein o' my body. It war the ole 'oman's voice. I looked down an' seed her seated on the hoss, at the spot whar our shanty had stud. She'd jest arter, arter a good bit o' trouble in makin' her way through the fallen trees. In a minnit more, she'd slid out o' the saddle, an' war stannin' umnerneath me."

"Wal, boys, ye may think it war all over, but it wa'n't. My ole 'oman war thar down on the groun' an' I up in the tree. Thar war we, man an' wife, not more'n thirty feet apart. F'r all that, we war as well seprated as if a Indiana divorce-court hed passed sentence atween us. She ked do no more torst gittin' me down thun I meself; so thar war I in the grup o' thet fork jest as tight as ever!"

"An' thar hed I to stay till she remounted the ole hoss an' rode back to the cross-roads store; whur a wheen o' fellurs war soon gathered and kim on w' ropes an' a ladder."

"They got me down at last: but 'twar all a month afore my ribs feeled right arter the ugly squeezin' they'd experienced atween the two prongs o' the dead-wood."

"So, boys; ye kin be thankful to y'ur stars thet they niver put ye onto the track o' a herrikin—when it war ragin'."

THE STORY OF THE DEWDROPS.

THE fairies are born when the daylight dies,
And starlight is sparkling in summer skies.
Exulting all night in their revels gay,
They die at the first rosy blush of day.
Their carols resound through the woods no more;
No more will they dance on the daisied floor;
Of elfin and fairy no trace appears,
Save tremulous dewdrops;—the fairies' tears!

The nightingale sings to them all night long;
And blithely they dance to her thrilling song.
But, suddenly,—dances and songs have ceased!
The morning is nigh, in the golden east!—
They weep,—for they know that their end is nigh;—
And when into air they dissolve, and die,
Each leaflet an eloquent record bears;—
The dewdrops of morning are fairies' tears!

HENRY HERSEE.

"DOLPHIN'S" CHRISTMAS STORY.

"I TELL you, Burt, this business *must* be done to-night. Ain't I master of the show? Blame me if I'll stand the nonsense of this darnation Britisher any longer!"

"And I'll try my luck with his little English beauty at the same time," I heard McDougall add to himself as he crossed the stage, and followed Burt out of the hall.

What could he mean?

Perhaps I mightn't have been too straight-laced. I had been too long in the profession for that. But the dark allusion to the bright little lady of our company at once filled me with suspicion. May be you've seen the sea-lion at the "Zoo," swaying himself right and left in anxious expectation of catching a palatable whiting from his keeper? Well, my anxiety impelled me to spring half out of my tub, to sway to and fro in a similar fashion, and to send a quick glance through the stage-door at the retreating figures of McDougall and Burt.

I could see the snow lay thick on the ground, and it was yet snowing. And across the lane I could just make out Abram Lake standing at the open door of his friend's shanty. Then the stage-door was slammed fast, and I should have been in complete darkness had not a faint light from a window opposite me relieved the gloom somewhat.

The sight of Abram Lake reassured me a bit. Somehow or other I had come to think he was well-inclined towards my favourite manager, Mr. Martin, and his young and pretty wife.

Who could help being won, indeed, by Bessie Martin? I couldn't, for one. There was such a tender, trustful look in her laughing blue eyes, that one was compelled to surrender at discretion. She was frank to the verge of flirting, I now and then thought, when others were favoured by her smiles and sweet speeches. And I sometimes felt an uncomfortable feeling come over me when Martin, poor man! bewildered over head and ears with hard work, seemed to neglect his fairy of a wife, and gave MacDougall more opportunities than was prudent of being in Bessie's company.

MacDougall, it could not be denied, was a good-looking, well-dressed man. Whether his attentions were agreeable to Bessie, or whether she cheerfully endured them for politic reasons, I couldn't quite make out. He used generally to be close handy when she—our one musician—deftly plied her busy fingers, and drew the sweetest music possible from our rather crazy piano, whilst I went through the tricks which used to draw hundreds every night to see the "Performing Dolphin" at Henryburgh. He would turn over the pages of her music-book, and, bending low, would always be whispering something in her ear. Had he been all the time leading up to the outrage which he might even now be attempting?

Were the differences that had existed between MacDougall and Martin throughout our tour in the States on the point of being settled by violence? Martin had my heartiest sympathy. Still, it was impossible for me to do aught but wait and be on the alert for whatever might happen.

Faintly, as a distant chime, the merry tinkling of the sleigh-bells stole now and again into the silent hall, and told me the good folk of Henryburgh were speeding home from their bracing ride over the snow. Then all was quiet, till I heard the sound of footsteps in the lane, and the murmur of voices.

My heart almost ceased to beat, so anxiously was I listening. But for hours all was silence. Twelve o'clock, one o'clock chimed. The moonlight at length gleamed through the window, lighting up my little platform and the cannon which surmounted it, and which it was my crowning duty to fire as the finale of my performance of a night.

Two o'clock had not long struck when I heard a rustling noise outside, and soon after saw a black object appear at the window.

It was the face of Burt. Evidently the "business" was about to be attempted by MacDougall's tool.

I instinctively leapt out on to the stage. Simultaneously, the window was raised by Burt, and he thrust his head in.

My mind was instantly made up. I was convinced that this burglarious visitation boded no good to Martin; and it flashed upon me there was only one means of awakening Martin's friend, Abram Lake.

An inclined plank led up to my cannon. Up this I wobbled as Burt had almost entered the window. Quick as thought, I snapped at the string with my teeth, and gave a smart pull. The usual flash and report followed. And, looking up, I had the satisfaction of seeing Burt, his face white with the scare, hastily withdraw his body through the window, and disappear rather more suddenly than he came.

The stage-door was opened a minute later. Happily, my ruse had succeeded! By the light of the lantern carried by one of the new arrivals I recognised Mr. Martin and Abram Lake.

"Nothing's missing, Abram," said Martin—I can see his tall manly figure and pale, bearded face before me now—holding up his lantern and giving a quick glance round, till his eyes rested on me with a kind of puzzled look. "But what the dickens does Dolph up there?"

"Wai, I guess Master Dolph has been having a kinder rehearsal all to himself, and he's jest fired a volley, I bet, to rouse us, the young varmint! Anyway, it's kinder freezing in this hyar place; and I move we make tracks back to my friend, Jaker's store."

"Not yet, Lake, depend upon it, Dolph's not done this without good cause. Look! that window's open. Let's reconnoitre outside! Down, Dolph, down, sir!"

They were not absent long. The first thing Martin did on his return was to pat me on the head, and hand me a second bountiful supply of fish when I was comfortably installed in my tub, Lake the meanwhile making it plain to me, from what he said to Mr. Martin, that they knew almost as much as I did as to McDougall's designs, and as to the attempt that had been made by Burt.

"Calculate," he said, "I'll jest have a shot at the durned thief if he tries his little game on again to-night. Durn me if that warn't the cleverest performance thet fish has gone through! Its clear thet the thief crept up the lane like a cat—ain't we seen his trail in the snow?—got up to thet window with a ladder, and was jest a-going to sneak in when Dolph kinder scared him and roused us at the same time. I'll let all Henryburgh know it before noon. And all the week you'll hev crowded houses, Mister Martin."

"Ay, but you're reckoning without McDougall. He has the audacity to claim the show as his own. I may as well tell you my position in a few words, Lake. Dolph was originally the property of my governor, Mr. Bailey, an Englishman. I came across to the States as his Manager, and found that Mr. Bailey had entered into partnership with this scoundrel McDougall, who professed to know all the ins and outs of the show business in this country. Bailey, being suddenly called back to England, left me as Manager, and by deed of attorney entitled me to receive half the profits of every exhibition on his behalf. But, no sooner had he sailed than McDougall tried all he knew to get the show entirely into his own hands. He used his own name in the bills and in the advertisements. Over and over again he has tried to get possession of the treasury in full. Over and over again I have only frustrated his tricks by virtue of a magistrate's order. We had a few words after the performance to-night; and from the threats he let drop, I feel sure he will make an attempt to remove Dolph bodily before morning. Hence your aid is very welcome, indeed, Lake!"

"Wai, sir, I won't stop to tell you now what made me offer you the help of Abram Lake. If you'll follow my advice, you'll jest come back along with me to Dick Jaker's over the way. We shall be warmer than we are hyar. We will leave the door ajar, and catch the durned thief if he tries it on agen!"

So I was somewhat easier when they departed, for I knew keen ears would be listening for Burt's return, and I felt I could have a quiet doze in safety.

I must have slept some hours. Seven o'clock struck when I awoke. A little after I heard a door slam in the lane, and a cheery "good-morning, Dolph," in Mr. Martin's familiar voice, stole in at the window, telling me his watch was at an end.

There could be nothing to fear, surely, now. It was daylight. The people were out and about in the main street of Henryburgh. The sleigh-bells were ringing—ringing in Christmas, mayhap, for that evening would be Christmas Eve, and I don't mind confessing the anticipation of a good glass of Christmas punch had something to do with my dozing off again—not for many minutes though!

I awoke with a hazy notion that some one had broken into the hall. The next moment I was in complete darkness. Something had been thrown over my tub. In vain I attempted to thrust my head through. The tub, enveloped in matting, was lifted from the stage, and borne out of the hall in spite of my struggles to escape. There could be no doubt I had at length fallen into the hands of the Philistines, and was being carried off bodily—whither I could not imagine.

We must have been fully two hours' drive from Henryburgh when an oath escaped my driver. Beyond question Burt was my captor. He lashed his horses into a mad gallop. The sleigh seemed to fly over the snow. Was he pursued? I listened intently, but could hear nothing but the smack of Burt's whip, and the thud-thud of the horses' hoofs, and the whirring noise of the sleigh.

A shot! Fresh curses from Burt! Rescue seemed nigh; but, alas! our speed did but increase.

The flight and pursuit continued till the sleigh was brought to a sudden pause, and my heart gave a joyous leap when I recognised the voice of Abram Lake.

"Look ye hyar, stranger," said Abram in his quiet resolute way, "if ye don't jest turn them horses round, and kin back to Henryburgh with me, I'll send a bullet through your durned head! Ye'd best be quick now. Look at this hyar warrant, and kin back with thet fish to Henryburgh!"

"Check, McDougall!" I chuckled as we shortly after returned to the hall, and Burt had the pleasure of restoring me to the stage before surrendering himself into the custody of the police.

But I was halloing before we were out of the wood! Mr. Martin presently entered with a face whiter than ever. It brightened up a little at sight of me.

"Bravo, Lake!" he said, "I have to thank you, and I do so with all my heart for bringing Dolph safely back. If I could only get a satisfactory telegram from the governor in England all might go well now!"

"What telegram?"

"Oh, I forgot! You started in pursuit before the summons against me was issued. In answer to my charge against him for larceny, McDougall accused me of perjury, and the confounded Mayor committed me, giving me the option of paying two thousand dollars bail or going to gaol. I was only let off for an hour or two by depositing all the ready cash I have: \$800. If the answer to my telegram doesn't come soon, Lake, I shall have to go to prison, and the show will be in McDougall's hands."

"Worse! the villain may rob me of something far dearer than mere means of living!" muttered Martin to himself through his clenched teeth, unheard by anyone save myself.

His fair little wife entered at that moment, and the dingy hall seemed to me all sunshiny, and I confidently looked up to see her glad smile reflected in his face. But his face was stern and white.

Presently, I heard her sweet voice asking, "Whatever has happened, Will?" and I knew a little form was nestling up to him, and a pair of violet eyes were fondly questioning him.

Abram Lake had quietly slipped out into the lane, and left them alone.

"Happened!" came the passionate reply, as if the stricken man could bear his trials no longer. "Only this. All I have lived and toiled for is slipping from me. The woman I loved—"

"Will!"

"Yes, you! Don't think your love-passages with McDougall have escaped my notice! He is my worst enemy; yet this morning I found you in earnest conversation with him."

"Yes, Will," was the impetuous reply of the young wife, "it was only this morning the villain appeared in his true colours. I confess I had taken his smiling face and attentions to mean mere courtesy. But he had the shamelessness to insult me with a base proposal to-day, Will. I only stopped to give him an indignant answer—indeed, that was all, Will, and then he hinted you were in peril, Will. What did he mean? do tell me, dearest. Confide in me! Would that you had confided in me before! Then I should never, never have permitted the man to remain in my company a minute!"

"Can this be true?" was the doubtful response. "Where were you, then, when I returned home this morning?"

"Whar!" was the loud, bluff answer that called their attention to the gaunt form of Abram Lake, who had hastily entered, holding a letter in his hand. "Why, the dear lady—the kindest sister of mercy that ever breathed on this hyar air—was nursing my sick wife, Mr. Martin, and, thank God, she has brought her round. Guess I shouldn't hev gone heart and soul, man, into yer troubles—guess I shouldn't hev rode till I was fit to drop from the saddle, if it hadn't bin for that little angel thyar."

"My darling, forgive me!" was the softened appeal of the strong man, as he clasped the little loving woman to his heart, adding with a kind of sobbing laugh, "Confound that Dolph! He's splashed some water into my eyes!"

"Forgive me, Bessie!" he repeated in a tremulous whisper, "the truth is I have been utterly worn out in mind and body by the

treachery of that cursed McDougall, and I didn't like to burden you with my troubles, darling!"

"But you haven't told me of the peril you were in, Will," was her anxious appeal after the kiss of forgiveness had been given.

"Guess this hyar telegram will be yer best answer, sir," broke in Abram, as he handed the message to Mr. Martin.

With a hopeful look on his worn face, the manager tore open the envelope, and read:—

Have placed 4000 dollars to your credit. Draw at once on Goodwin & Co., of Henryburgh. Will come myself by next steamer. Keep MacDougall out of the show till I come.

"Thank Heaven! We're well clear of this McDougall at last, Bessie. I'm in no peril now, dearest. Abram, I'll have this telegram posted throughout Henryburgh. We shall have the biggest house the town has ever seen. And you, and my wife, and Dolph shall spend a true English Christmas Eve together!"

JOHN LATBY, JUN.

A BOX OF DIAMONDS.

BY ALFRED A. GEARY.

WELL, as I said before, as it's Christmas Eve, I don't mind telling you the story:—It's a good many years ago now since it happened, before the days of the Mail Companies, and Glasgow Clippers, when a man had to make his will, and set his house in order before putting his foot on board ship: and when once you had passed the Eddystone, it was almost a hundred to one against your ever setting foot again in old England. However, here I am, laid up like an old hulk for the remainder of my days, with nothing to fall back upon but my memories of the past, and sad memories some of them are, you may stake your life. I was a young man then, and had been knocking about in the Brazils and the West Indies—everywhere in South America, I may say, for I believe I made one of the first parties of Englishmen to cross the Andes from Valparaiso to Buenos Ayres, no light feat in those days, I can tell you. I was a doctor by profession, and many a time by the exercise of my professional skill, I have saved my own scalp among the savage Indians of the Pampas. I am not going, however, to tell you anything about the Indians now—some other time, perhaps—a slice of lemon? Thank you—and sugar; that'll do. Now for my story:—

As I said before, I had been knocking about a good deal in South America, and shipped as doctor on board an old tub of a trader leaving Rio de Janeiro, homeward bound for Bristol, with a full cargo and a couple of cabin passengers.

The *Good Hope* was commanded by Captain McFarlane, a hard-headed old Scotchman. John Williamson first mate, and a crew of thirteen hands all told, made up of Englishmen, Dutchmen, Swedes, and a couple of niggers, one of whom was the steward's mate. We sailed on the 14th of December, a blazing hot day, with scarcely a breath of wind to fill the sails; but the captain was anxious to get away, as Yellow Jack was in port, and he had no mind to keep knocking his heels in quarantine longer than he could help. We had, however, hardly got clear of Raza Island, when a breeze sprang up, and we were soon bowling along as fast as the old ship could be made to step along, all studding sails set, and, so far, a clean bill of health on board.

On the 21st, however, I was sitting for'ard, getting a breath of fresh air, and smoking my pipe, when Pete, the steward's mate, came up, and summoned me aft to see one of our two cabin passengers, Mr. William Grierson, who had been very unwell during the night, and began to be afraid that he was in for a touch of the fever. I went aft and saw him, but there did not appear to be any very alarming symptoms just at present, so I prescribed some cooling medicine and left him.

He was worse, however, next day, and the next, yet it was not a case of yellow fever, and there was something in the symptoms that I am not ashamed to say, fairly baffled me. On the 24th he was so much worse that I began to be seriously alarmed, and communicated my fears to the captain.

"It is not yellow fever, of that I am sure."

"What is it, then, doctor?"

"Well, to tell truth, I can hardly say. Nothing that I can administer seems to do him any good, and he is evidently sinking rapidly."

"Humph!" said the captain, "mysterious to say the least of it,—Does he know of his condition?"

The conversation was cut short by the arrival of Pete, who informed us that Mr. Grierson had been seized with a sudden and alarming access of pain, and was apparently dying, adding that the patient wished to see me at once and alone. In obedience to the summons I went below, and having shut the cabin door and administered the necessary remedies, asked the dying man (for there could be little doubt he was dying) the reason for his wishing to see me.

"I wish to see you because I feel that I am dying, and I can put off no longer what I wish to say, if it is to be said at all," responded the patient, feebly—

"Fetch me that box from off the top of my sea-chest and listen—"

I brought it, a small oblong mahogany box, and laid it by his side upon the coverlet, and Mr. Grierson laying his hand upon it and at the same time detaching a key from a string by which it was suspended round his neck, with which his fingers played nervously during his recital, continued—

"I am a murderer—Aye! you may start and think perhaps that my mind is wandering, but it is the truth. Twenty-five years ago, twenty-five years of misery—I committed the deed which I am now in the presence of my Maker about to confess. I was a clerk in a banking house in London, and the facilities and opportunities for peculation offered me were too much for me to withstand, but circumstances occurred which convinced me that discovery could hardly be much longer delayed, and I was casting about how to make my escape while there was yet time. Just at this juncture one of the senior clerks in the house had to be sent down to Bristol in charge of a very large sum of money in gold, and I was deputed to accompany him to guard the treasure. In those times matters were differently conducted from what they are in the present day, and we had to take the money in a box, strongly secured and sealed, with us, by the mail coach which started from one of the old inns in the City for the West of England. There was a sum of 2000 guineas in the box, and the idea suggested itself to my mind that if I could become master of such a sum I could get clear away by some ship leaving Bristol for foreign parts before the bank could become aware of the fact of my escape. But how to get rid of my companion. Briefly, for I feel my strength sinking, and I must hurry forward to the end of what I have to tell you. I procured poison, which I poured into the leathern bottle, in which I carried my refreshment on the road, and, watching my opportunity, offered it to him to drink. He sank back in a corner of the coach, and in a few minutes was a corpse. Emptying the remaining contents of the bottle out of window, and placing the dead man in such an attitude as would lead people to suppose he had died naturally in his sleep, I hailed the guard with every simulation of trepidation, and stopped the coach. The outside passengers got down, and a scene of great excitement occurred. At the next village, the local doctor, who as it happened was a man of no great skill, was sent for, and dexterously insinuating to him that I had known my companion to have suffered from heart disease of some years standing, with many compliments to the professional acumen of the doctor himself, that worthy was not long in pronouncing it a case of sudden death from disease of the heart; and I was suffered, in view of my representations as to the urgency of my mission to Bristol, to proceed on my journey. This is the bare outline of my crime, the details would only weary you, and my time is short. I succeeded in leaving England and reaching Brazil, where I have amassed a fortune. That fortune is within the box which lies beneath my hand."

He paused, for a violent spasm seized him, and it was not for some time that I could recover him sufficiently to enable him to proceed.

Raising himself in bed with difficulty, he unlocked the box, and disclosed an array of unset diamonds, whose brilliancy fairly dazzled me.

"Here are £50,000 worth of diamonds," proceeded Mr. Grierson. "I have converted all my fortune into these gems, and these I intend to entrust to your care. Take this box at once to your own cabin and return to me for your instructions as to the disposal of the contents."

I hesitated, but he was imperative.

"Not a word—I am dying fast, and I implore you to accede to my last request."

I took the box, locked it, and left the cabin.

As I opened the door I ran up against Pete.

"What the devil are you doing here?"

"Nothing, Massa."

I passed on along the main deck towards my own cabin forward, and on my way I met Captain McFarlane.

"How is your patient, Doctor?"

"Dying, I fear. He cannot last long."

I passed on, and depositing the box in a place of safety, returned. Grierson was rapidly sinking, and in a few broken sentences he instructed me as to the disposal of his property, £10,000 was to go to the bankers, Messrs. Holt and Wardley, of Lombard-street, and the balance to the family of the murdered man, whose name was given me, and whose representative I pledged my word to do my best to discover.

Finally, binding me over not to disclose what I had just been told, except to the parties named by him in his dying bequest, Grierson relapsed into a state of partial insensibility, from which I in vain attempted to rouse him, and before half-an-hour had elapsed, the unhappy man was no more.

Going on deck, I communicated the news to the captain, who gave the necessary directions as to the funeral, which took place next day; and once more we were ploughing our way through the blue water as if nothing had happened.

I was an altered man. The strange commission with which I had been entrusted weighed on my mind. Over and over again in the stillness of the night I opened the box of diamonds, and gazed on the brilliancy of the gems. What proof was there that they were not mine; the box with its brass plate bearing the owner's name could be destroyed in a moment, and then—Over and over again the devil whispered to me, but, thank God, I resisted the temptation. I would fulfil the trust confided to me, and I prayed fervently for strength to resist the evil promptings of my baser self.

One day I sat alone, the box unlocked on my table, gazing with an irrepressible curiosity, which I was unable to control, on the jewels which scintillated with a devilish lustre before my dazed vision. The door suddenly opened, and Captain McFarlane entered.

"I beg your pardon, doctor, didn't know you were engaged;" but before I could close the box or reply his eye had caught the shimmer of the brilliants.

"Hallo! what's here?"

With a firm hand he closed the lid and read the name upon the plate. Innocent as I was, involuntarily stung by the remembrance of what my thoughts had been but a moment before, I quailed before his eye.

"I know all now—that man was poisoned—consider yourself my prisoner."

I endeavoured to explain. I told everything as it had occurred, and I appealed to the captain to believe the story, or at least to await its reasonable confirmation, before acting on his rash conclusion. He was incredulous. One concession I obtained, and that was, that all should be kept secret till our arrival in port, and that I should not be publicly branded as a suspected murderer before the crew.

A fortnight passed, a weary fortnight, during which I repeatedly endeavoured to shake the conclusion at which Captain McFarlane had so hastily arrived. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, the captain fell sick. He was suffering from a low fever. I begged him to accept my services.

"Never; you shall not poison me too."

Days passed, and the captain got worse and worse; he babbled in his delirium of poison, of stolen jewels; and night and day I watched at his bedside, jealously excluding everybody who might perchance overhear his ravings and rise up in judgment against me.

One day the crisis came. A few hours would determine all. If he died I was once more a free man, free from the imputation of a foul crime, free to carry out my honest intention of fulfilling the dead man's wishes, but also free from the dread of exposure which to me would be worse, as a bare suspicion, than death itself.

If the captain could but sleep, his life would be saved. How easy to make that sleep his last—the devil was at my elbow, the laudanum bottle in my hand. But at my sorest need the strength to resist was given to me. I poured out the proper dose, and advanced towards the cot in which the captain lay. A strange light was in his eyes. Rising suddenly, and throwing the bedclothes off his tall, lean, sinewy form, he half leaped from the bed, and seizing the box of diamonds, which he had throughout his illness never allowed from beneath his pillow, in one hand, he shrieked—

"Never, never! will you allow me to be poisoned like a dog! Help! some of you." The effort was too much, clashing the box to his bosom he fell back on his pillow, a convulsive shudder passed over his frame—He was dead.

I don't pretend to analyse my feelings at that moment. My reason well-nigh deserted me. I did not stop to think of the possible consequences. Snatching the box from the relaxing grasp of the corpse, I rushed from the cabin and fell over Pete the negro, who was just outside.

"See to the captain. He is dead"—and I sped onwards; but the powerful negro had his hand upon my arm.

"Massa Doctor not go so quick—Massa Grierson dead, Cap'n die too—Doctor got his box of jewels—Give up dat box!" and the negro seized me in his grasp and struggled with me for the possession of the box—

At that moment the strength of a lion was in me, I wrestled with my assailant and freeing myself from his grasp made for the companion stairs. I had reached the deck, with what intention I knew not, but Pete was again with me, wrestling with the strength of a demon for the possession of the prize.

The ship was rolling heavily in a dead calm, and as we fell together we slid across the deck towards the lee scuppers. With a superhuman effort I freed my right arm, and with all my force threw the box over the quarter deck railings. It flew open as it fell into the sea, and in the moonlight the diamonds fell like a shower of falling stars into the black water.

The negro, seeing my movement, left his hold of me, and sprang forward to catch the box as it fell. A heavy lurch, and I was alone on the deck.

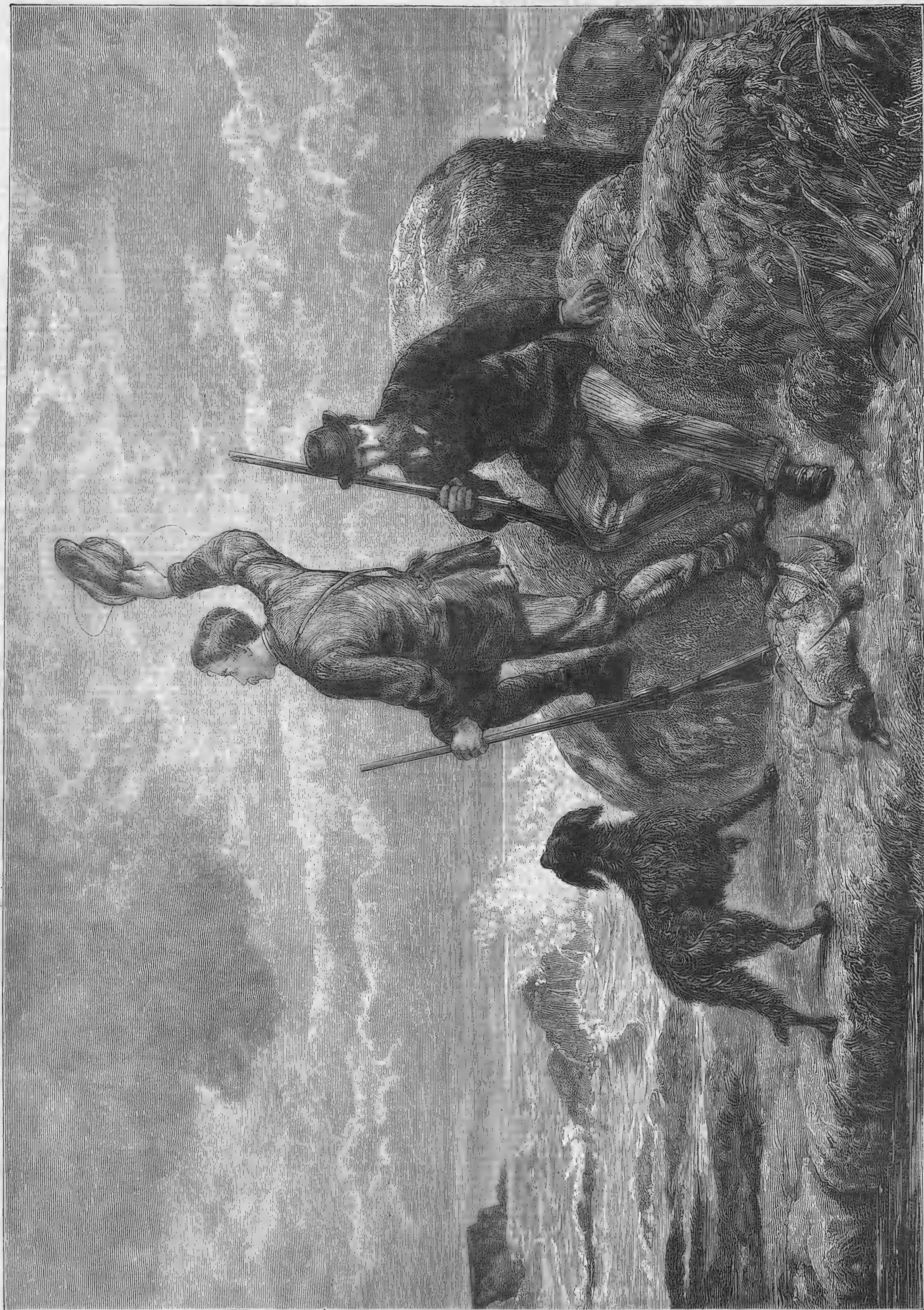
The rapidity with which everything had taken place seemed to have stunned me, and deprived me of the power to utter even one cry for help. When I recovered myself it was too late—Pete and the diamonds were gone for ever.

I looked round—the deck was deserted, save by the man at the wheel, who, half hidden by the wheel-house, had not seen the struggle.

Can I be blamed? I held my tongue. The captain was buried at dawn, and the chief officer took command of the ship. It was clear that Pete must have fallen overboard, and no one suspected the share I had had in the catastrophe. In due time we arrived at Bristol, and for my own satisfaction I instituted the necessary inquiries as to the individuals named by the man Grierson. The bank had long since ceased to exist. I traced some vague rumour of a man having died suddenly in a stage coach while passing through an obscure village in Somersetshire, but could never obtain any clue to his representatives. It was perhaps as well that I failed. I am still a poor man, but I would rather die so than accept the possibility of becoming rich at the terrible risk which attended the unlucky bequest of The Box of Diamonds.

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MESSRS. TATTERSALL beg to give notice that, in consequence of Christmas Day falling on Saturday, there will NOT BE A SALE at ALBERT-GATE on MONDAY, DEC. 27.

NOTICE.

MESSRS. TATTERSALL beg to give notice that their SALES on MONDAY will commence at ELEVEN O'CLOCK until further notice, getting to the Boxes at 1.30.

TO be LET by AUCTION, by Messrs. TATTERSALL, near ALBERT-GATE, HYDE PARK, on MONDAY, JAN. 10, the GLASGOW STUD STALLIONS for 1876. Fifteen of the most powerful thoroughbred horses in the country to be let for next season. May be seen at the Stud Farm, near Enfield, on application to Mr. Gilbert:—

1. GENERAL PEEL.
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4. THE DRAKE.
5. BEAUVALE.
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9. ROAN HORSE, by Brother to Bird-on-the-Wing out of Rapid Rhone's dam.
10. FIRST FLIGHT.
11. YOUNG TOXOPHILITE.
12. CLEVELAND.
13. TOM BOWLING HORSE.
14. MAKE HASTE.
15. DE LACEY.
16. ALEXANDER.

May be seen at any time at the Stud Farm, near Enfield.

TO be SOLD by AUCTION, by Messrs. TATTERSALL, near ALBERT-GATE, HYDE PARK, on MONDAY, DEC. 20, the following HORSES, all in training, and winners of races this year; the property of a gentleman:—

1. MOZART, 6 years old, by Scottish Chief or Costa out of Morgan la Faye (dam of Marie Stuart), by Cowi.
2. PACHA, a bay gelding, 5 years old, by Knight of the Crescent, dam by Wild Dayrell—Sagacity.
3. CONSOLE, a chestnut colt, 4 years old, by Consul out of No Chance, by Newminster.
4. JARDINIERE, a bay colt, 2 years old, by Blink-hoole out of Princess Beatrice, by Newminster.

Also the property of a gentleman:—
1. ANTEUS, a colt, 2 years old, by Ethus out of Cybele, by Marsyas out of Kate, by Auckland.
2. PATRIOT, 5 years old, by Defender; a qualified hunter.

TO be SOLD by AUCTION, by Messrs. TATTERSALL, near ALBERT-GATE, HYDE PARK, on MONDAY, JAN. 3, the following HORSES IN TRAINING, the property of a gentleman:—

1. DALHAM, a brown colt, 4 years old, by Cathedral out of Gertrude (the dam of Curate), by The Marquis out of Betsy Carr, by Fazzoletto out of Pink Bonnet, by Lancroft; winner of the Chesterfield Handicap at Goodwood, 1874, and the City and Suburban, 1875.
2. ASCETIC, a bay colt, 4 years old, by Hermit out of Lady Alicia, by Melbourne out of Testy.

TO be SOLD by AUCTION, by Messrs. TATTERSALL, near ALBERT-GATE, HYDE PARK, on MONDAY, JAN. 3, the following HUNTERS, the property of John Swan, Esq., Lincoln, who is unable to hunt. The horses are in hard hunting condition, and have been carrying 15st:—

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3. SHANDYGAFF, 8 years old.
3. SIR ROGER, rising 5 years old.

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LIFE GUARDSMAN, a Yorkshire coaching horse, dark bay, with black legs, by Captain of the Guards out of a magnificent bay coaching mare of Mr. Esby's; her dam was also a grand bay coaching mare. Captain of the Guards was by Guardsman out of Mr. Fawcett's Paulinus, by Mr. Burton's Old Paulinus; her dam by Gamon, granddam by Lambkin, great granddam by Mr. Agar's Old Horse.

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THE KNIGHT OF ST. PATRICK (sire of Knight of the Crescent, Moslem, Orangeman, Tenedos, The Knight, Queen of the Dees, &c.), by The Knight of St. George out of Pocahontas (the dam of Stockwell, Rataplan, King Tom, &c. Thoroughbred mares 10gs, 10s the groom.

THE WARRIOR, a white horse, 16 hands 1 inch high with great power and bone, fine action and temper, by King Tom out of Woodnymph, by Longbow—Mrs. Gill, by Viator—Lady Fractious, by Comus. Thoroughbred mares at 10gs and 10s the groom, half-bred mares at 5gs and 5s the groom.

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PERO GOMEZ, at 50gs a Mare. **MUSKET**, at 40gs a Mare. Foaling Mares, 25s.; Barren Mares, 20s. per week. For further particulars, apply to Mr. P. SCOTT, as above.

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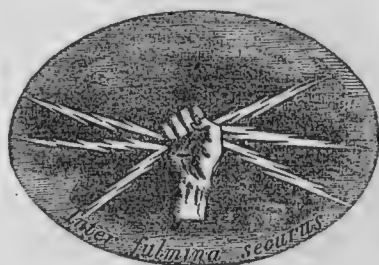
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It gives a better pattern and greater penetration.

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The 42 grains or 4½ drachms, when rammed, occupy only the space of 3 drachms of the black; the reason being that the Schultze is lighter and more elastic, and therefore takes more compression than the black; thus the same size cartridge-cases are used, and occupy the same space in the barrel.

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CHRISTMAS WITH THE GUILD—, MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—I—.—DRAWN BY H. S. MARKS, A.R.A.

THEATRES.

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.—Lessee and Manager, Mr. J. B. Buckstone. Every Evening, at 7.30, the Farce, in one act, by T. Edgar Pemberton, *A HAPPY MEDIUM*—Messrs. C. Warner, Everill, Weathersby; Miss Minnie Walton, Miss M. Harris, and Mrs. E. Fitzwilliam. At 8.15, a New and Original Comedy by H. J. Byron, entitled *MARRIED IN HASTE*. Characters by Mr. Hermann Vezin, Messrs. C. Warner, Howe, Rogers, Braid, Osborne, Rivers, and Mr. Henry J. Byron; Miss Emily Thorne, Miss Harrison, and Miss Carlotta Addison. Stage Manager, Mr. Coe. Doors open at 7, commence at 7.30. No free list. Box-office open from 10 till 5.

Mr. SOTHERN will, on MONDAY, DEC. 27, commence a *THREE WEEKS' FAREWELL ENGAGEMENT*, previous to his return to America. Mr. Buckstone will reappear at the Haymarket, and Miss Lucy Buckstone will make her debut in London. Order of performances:—*GARRICK and MARRIED LIFE*, Monday, Dec. 27, and five following nights; *HOME and MARRIED LIFE*, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, Jan. 3, 4, 5, 6; *OUR AMERICAN COUSIN*, Friday, Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, Jan. 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13; *GARRICK and A REGULAR FIX*, on Friday and Saturday, Jan. 14 and 15. Mr. Sothern's Benefit and Last Appearance, Saturday, Jan. 15.—Acting Manager, Mr. C. Walter.

DRURY LANE.—Mr. and Mrs. BOUCICAULT in the great Irish Drama *SUAUGHRAUN*, illustrated with beautiful scenery by William Beverly, at 7.45 every evening, preceded by the *WHITE HAT*. To conclude with *A NAHOB FOR AN HOUR*. Prices from 6d. to £4 4s. Doors open at 6.30; commence at 7. Box-office open from 10 till 5 daily.

ROYAL STRAND THEATRE.—Sole Lessee and Manageress, Mrs. Swanborough. EVERY EVENING, at 7, TWO TO ONE. At 7.30, *A LESSON IN LOVE*—Messrs. Cox, Grahame, and Vernon; Mesdames M. Terry, T. Lavis, and Ada Swanborough. At 9.30, *LOO*—Messrs. Terry, Marius, Cox, &c.; Mesdames A. Claude, Venne, Jones, &c.

VAUDEVILLE THEATRE.—EVERY EVENING.

Enormous Success of "Our Boys." At 7.30, *A WHIRLIGIG*; at 8, *OUR BOYS*, by Henry J. Byron; concluding with *A FEARFUL FOG*; supported by Messrs. William Farren, Thomas Thorne, Charles Sugden, and David James; Mesdames Amy Roselle, Kate Bishop, Nellie Walters, Cicely Richards, Sophie Larkin, &c. Free List entirely suspended. Acting Manager, Mr. D. McKay.

LYCEUM.—LAST FOUR NIGHTS of *MACBETH*. Macbeth, Mr. Henry Irving; Lady Macbeth, Miss Bateman (Mrs. Crowe). Preceded, at 7, by *THE DAY AFTER THE WEDDING*. On Boxing night, and for a limited number of nights, Mr. Irving as Hamlet. Box-office open from 10 till 5. Booking fees abolished.

SANGERS' GRAND NATIONAL AMPHITHEATRE.—SATURDAY, DEC. 18, positively the last night of *MAZEPPA*; or, the Wild Horse of Tartary, and the Company's performing before Christmas, in consequence of the extensive preparations requisite for the production of Sangers' Grand Annual Pantomime, entitled *LADY GODIVA*; or, Harlequin St. George and the Dragon and the Seven Champions, which will eclipse all former productions, even at this gigantic establishment. Gorgeous Scenery, Magnificent Costumes and Appointments; the best Company in London; beautiful Animals, Horses, Zebras, Antelopes, Reindeers, Mules, Elephants, Camels, Dromedaries—in short, a Stud and Company numbering over 1500.—Sole Proprietors, J. and G. SANGER.

NATIONAL STANDARD THEATRE, Bishopsgate. Proprietors and Managers, Messrs. John and Richard Douglass. Opening of the New Entrance to Boxes and Stalls. Two grand performances for the MANAGERS' BENEFIT, MONDAY, DEC. 20. Mr. PHELPS as Cardinal Wokey in *HENRY VIII.*, supported by Mrs. Charles Calvert, &c. The Paynes, from Covent Garden, and the Moore and Burgess Minstrels. On Tuesday, Dec. 21, grand Operatic Performances. BOXING DAY, DEC. 27, the Pantomime, *CHILDREN IN THE WOOD*. The Paynes as pantomimists.

ROYAL COURT THEATRE.—Lessee and Manager, Mr. Hare. EVERY EVENING, at 8.15 precisely, Mr. W. S. Gilbert's New and Original Fairy Play, *BROKEN HEARTS*. Characters will be played by Miss Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendal), Miss Hollingshead, Miss Plowden, Mr. Kendal, and Mr. G. W. Anson. Preceded by, at 7.30, *A MORNING CALL*—Miss Hughes and Mr. C. Kelly. And to conclude with *UNCLE'S WILL*—Miss Madge Robertson and Mr. Kendal. Box-office hours 11 till 5. No fees for booking seats. Acting Manager and Treasurer, Mr. John Huy.

ALHAMBRA THEATRE. Manager, Mr. J. A. CAVE. SPECTRESHEIM, a success unparalleled.—William Rignold, H. Walsham, J. H. Jarvis, Frank Hall, and Harry Paulton; Katherine Munro, Marion West, and Emma Chambers. The Majiltons, the Trois Diables, in their astonishing performance, causing the utmost amount of amazement and enthusiasm. Splendid Band, conducted by M. Jacobi. Open at 6.45 nightly. ALHAMBRA.

ALHAMBRA.—THE FLOWER QUEEN.—NEW GRAND BALLET D'ACTION by M. LAURI. Magnificent Scenery by Albert Calcott. Gorgeous Costumes by Miss Fisher, from designs by Alfred Maltby. Novel Mechanical Effect by Sloman and Son.—Miles. PITTERI, PERTOLDI, and upwards of One Hundred Corps de Ballet Music selected, arranged, and composed by M. JACOBI.

ALEXANDRA PALACE.—The GRAND CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME, entitled *HARLEQUIN, THE YELLOW DWARF*; or, The King of the Gold-Mines, written expressly by Brothers GRINN (in which Mr. GEORGE CONQUEST will appear and introduce marvellous mechanical Pantomimic Properties and his extraordinary Salutory Feats), will be produced on TUESDAY NEXT, DEC. 21, on an unprecedentedly magnificent scale.

Herbert Campbell as King Marmalade, Miss Carry Nelson, Miss Dot Robins, Mdlles. Amy Forrest, M. Inch, Alma Edroff, &c., and Three Hundred Performers. Magnificent Scenery by Mr. W. Brew, W. Johnstone, and H. Nedmé, &c. Costumes by Auguste and Cie., Paris. Grand Ballet by Espinosa. Children's Ballet. The Harlequinade by the celebrated Lauri Family. Sprites by the Wonderful Jackey Troupe. Brothers Guida, the great Skaters; Emmett's Performing Goats; and a host of other great and varied Attractions, making this Production the CHILDREN'S GREAT PANTOMIME. Accessible under cover from all parts and by direct trains from King's-cross. One Shilling. Children Half price.

CRYSTAL PALACE.—Calendar for Week ending DEC. 25, 1875.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 22.—Production of Great Christmas Pantomime, "Jack in Wonderland," by Mr. E. L. Blanchard. Characters by Misses Caroline Parkes, Manetti, Montgomery; Messrs. T. H. Friend, the Bernard Troupe, M. Espinosa, the Midget Hanlons.

THURSDAY, DEC. 23, Repetition of Pantomime.

FRIDAY, DEC. 24, Repetition of Pantomime.

SATURDAY, DEC. 25.—Christmas Day.

Admission Daily (Saturday included), One Shilling, or by Guinea Season Ticket.

CATTLE SHOW WEEK. SPECIAL ATTRACTION.

MDME. TUSSAUD'S EXHIBITION, Baker-street. PORTRAIT MODELS of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales as M. W. G. M. of Freemasons of England, the Emperor and Empress of Russia, Emperor and Empress of Germany, King Alfonso XII., Victor Emmanuel, the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, Dr. Kenaly, M.P. Costly Court Dresses. The complete line of British Monarchs, and 300 Portrait Models of Celebrities. Admission, One Shilling. Children under Twelve, Sixpence. Extra Room, Sixpence. Open from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m.

MR. SOTHERN'S PROVINCIAL TOUR.

BELFAST, T. R. Dec. 6 to „ 18.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.—ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, Regent's Park.—Admission, Sixpence every day (except Sunday) from Dec. 21 to Jan. 6, inclusive.

RAILWAYS.

BRIGHTON SEASON.—EXTRA TRAINS.—A New Express-Train, consisting of First-Class Carriages, and including a PULLMAN DRAWING-ROOM CAR, will run Every Weekday, between Victoria and Brighton, as under:—

VICTORIA	dep.	10 45	BRIGHTON	dep.	5 45
BRIGHTON	arr.	11 53	VICTORIA	arr.	6 53

This Train will convey Passengers at the usual Express Fares each way, a small extra charge being made for the Pullman Drawing-Room Car.

BRIGHTON.—EVERY SUNDAY.—Cheap First-Class Train from Victoria, 10.45 a.m., calling at Clapham Junction and Croydon.

Fare, there and back, First Class, 10s. Returning same day by any First-Class Train, including a Special Train at 8.30 p.m.

BRIGHTON - GRAND AQUARIUM.—EVERY SATURDAY, Fast Trains for Brighton leave Victoria at 11.50 a.m., calling at Clapham Junction; and from London Bridge 12 noon, calling at Croydon (East).

Fare—First Class, Half a Guinea, including admission to the Aquarium and the Royal Pavilion (Palace, Picture Gallery, and Grounds). Available to return by any train the same day.

Tickets and every information at the West-End General Inquiry Office, 28, Regent-circus, Piccadilly; and at the Victoria and London Bridge Stations.

(By order) J. P. KNIGHT, General Manager.

ROYAL AQUARIUM AND SUMMER AND WINTER GARDEN SOCIETY.—SPECIAL NOTICE.—The LAST BALLOT for Fellows previous to the Opening will take place on the 24th inst. Applications for Forms should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. Bruce Phillips, of whom all particulars may be obtained.

By order, W. W. ROBERTSON, Managing Director.

Broadway-chambers, Westminster.

FIRST ANNUAL FINE-ART EXHIBITION, 1876, of the ROYAL AQUARIUM AND SUMMER AND WINTER GARDEN.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

The Last Day for receiving Works of Art is DEC. 28.

The Society's gold medal and £100 will be awarded for the best oil-painting exhibited, as also the Society's gold medal and £100 for the best water-colour painting, and the Society's gold medal and £100 for the best piece of sculpture. Five silver medals and five bronze medals will also be placed at the disposal of the art committee for award for special merit. No work of art which is not bona-fide the property of the artist is eligible for a prize.

The Executive have instituted an art-union, and prizes to the amount of £3000 will be distributed among Fellows and season-ticket holders, and these prizes will be selected mainly from the society's galleries.

Intending exhibitors can obtain a copy of the rules and regulations on application to the Secretary of the Art Committee, Broadway Chambers, Westminster.

HENGLER'S GRAND CIRQUE, Argyll-street,

Oxford-circus, the only properly-organised Circus Establishment in Great Britain. Doors open at 7, commencing at 7.30. Illuminated Morning Performances every Wednesday and Saturday. Open at 2, commencing at 2.30.—Prices, 4s., 3s., 2s., 1s.; Private Boxes, 30s. Box-office open daily from 10 till 4. No fees. Children under ten years half price. Carriages may be ordered for the evening performances at 10.20; afternoon at 4.15. Director and Proprietor, Mr. CHARLES HENGLER.

HENGLER'S GRAND CIRQUE, Argyll-street,

Oxford-circus.—Audiences nightly delighted with the charming entertainment presented. In preparation, a Comic Pantomime, entitled *VALENTINE AND ORSON*; or, Harlequin King Pippin and the Wild Man of the Woods. During the Christmas Holidays Performances Every Day at 2.30 and 7.30. Seats can now be booked.

ST. JAMES'S HALL, Piccadilly.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND. Performing EVERY EVENING, at 8; and on MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, and SATURDAYS, at 3 and 8.

The universally celebrated MOORE and BURGESS MINSTRELS, THE OLDEST ESTABLISHED AND MOST POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT IN EXISTENCE,

NOW IN THE ELEVENTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF ONE UNBROKEN SEASON AT ST. JAMES'S HALL.

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Doors open for Day Performance at 2.30.

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No fees; no charge for Programmes.

Fauteuils, 5s.; Sofa Stalls, 3s.; Area, 2s.; Gallery, 1s.

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View. SEA-LIONS, the only specimens ever brought to this country; Gigantic Turtle, from the Island of Ascension; large Octopods, English Sharks, Sea-Horses, Boar-Fish, Herring, Mackerel, Sterlet, from Russia; Telescope and Paradise Fish, from China; Red Char and Silver Char, Trout, Salmon, &c.

G. REEVES SMITH, General Manager.

BILLIARDS.—ST. JAMES'S HALL, Regent-

street.—JOHN ROBERTS, Jun. (Champion), and WILLIAM COOK for £200 and the Champion's Gold Cup, 1000 up, even, MONDAY, DEC. 20, 1875. The table manufactured expressly for this match by Messrs. Burroughes and Watts. Play to commence at 7.30 p.m. Reserved Seats, 21s.; Unreserved Seats, 10s. 6d. Tickets at Cook's Billiard Rooms, No. 99, Regent-street; and at Austin's office, St. James's Hall, 25, Piccadilly.

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weak or disordered state of health, prostration of strength, nervous derangement, neuralgic affections, aches and pains of every kind, sluggish circulation, depressed spirits, imperfect digestion, &c. By the formation of new blood, and its vivifying effect on the nerve centres, it develops new health, strength, and energy quickly. An increased appetite is always an effect of Pepper's Quinine and Iron Tonic. Thirty-two doses are contained in the 4s. 6d. bottle; next size, 11s.; stone jars, 22s. Sold by all Chemists; any Chemist will procure it; or sent for stamps by J. Pepper, 237, Tottenham-court-road, London.

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18-CARAT GOLD WATCH-CHAINS,

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IMPORTANT NOTICE.

The Directors beg to announce that extensive City premises have been secured at

10 and 11, NEW BRIDGE-STREET

(opposite Ludgate-hill Railway Station), which will be opened for Business so soon as the necessary alterations and fittings are completed, of which due notice will be given.

CARRIAGE OF GOODS.

GOODS will be forwarded CARRIAGE-FREE on the following conditions, viz. :—

Orders amounting to not less than 10s. in London and Suburbs.
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 SHARES.—The remainder of the First Issue of Shares, Preference and Ordinary (the former bearing 6 per cent interest), will be allotted according to priority of application.

Special attention is directed to the fact that membership in this association is not limited to any particular class, but is open to the general public. Non-shareholders' Tickets, entitling the holder to the advantages of free carriage, on terms above stated, 5s. each.

Prospectuses, containing full particulars, and forms of applications for shares can be obtained on application to the secretary at the above address.

By order, W. ASHROX, Secretary.

A GOOD MATCH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ANDY O'ROURKE."

THE town of Glenary stands in the middle of Munster, on the banks of a considerable river. It is now of no great importance in the world's progress. At one time it had walls defended with cannon; later it outgrew fortified limits; spread, now a little this way, then a little that, seeking soil to sustain a larger growth. Fifty years ago a frost fell upon it, and its experimental roots withered and snapped. Development ceased, and the saplings of its spring lie to-day blasted upon the plain. Its people are gathered once more within the lines of its warlike times; and all around it lie suburbs roofless to the rain and cheerless to the sun.

It is still, however, a place of mark in Ireland. It retains the position of capital to the county, together with such royalty on consideration as assize, head-quarters for a regiment of the line, staff-quarters for a regiment of militia; and among the salvage of its more ambitious days, are a member of parliament and a corporation. In consequence of its old fame and these lingering rays of splendour the inhabitants regard themselves as classics among people of less distinguished and venerable towns. Every man, woman, and child, is surrounded by an aristocratic air, a certain caste reserve, an unmistakable robe of exclusiveness, which, while covering hearts no less warm than those of outer barbarians, lends a fervid romanticism to the speech, manner, and carriage of the Glenareens.

A history of this town from the hour of its foundation down to the year which you and I are putting to such little profit would find many admirers. Among the Glenareens it would be greeted with enthusiasm and commemorated with tar-barrels. The two subscription libraries would buy copies, and the members for the county and borough could not do less than put each down his name for one. Nor do I think the sale in Glenary would be limited to these five copies; for I have in mind four rich maiden ladies and two wealthy tanners sure purchasers. These incentives to an ambitious historian, I intend as a hint to some hand now lying idle. For my present purpose I need go back no further than, as it were, yesterday; and those of my characters who are intermural can be found in no greater prominence among the civil or ecclesiastical records of the borough than simple names in registers dealing with lawful accidents to human units. A hundred years hence when the present cloud of men has evaporated, when a new flight of two-legged locusts is darkening the green fields of earth, some student, seeking golden deeds amid the ruins of our bye-gone age, may come upon the little romance it is mine to rehearse, and, sighing over the heroic past, exclaim to his midnight lamp, "Ah, there were men in those days!"

One fine evening early in April the only public billiard room in Glenary was deserted. The table, owned by a widow who resided in the house, had for familiar a small thin boy, no more than fourteen years of age, but thirty in experience of men and knowledge of the game. To Sam's, the marker's, taste for billiards had been added a rapacious hunger for odd coppers and an insatiable passion for fishing. Early on this evening a friend of his had come with the distracting intelligence that the trout were rising, and taking without fastidiousness as to the flies proper to the season, and without the least prudence. Sam's eyes glittered at this thrilling news, and he made up his mind to test the report practically. So he went to the widow and assured her that not a soul in all Glenary could dream of touching a cue on such a lovely night, particularly as the trout were standing on their tails on the top of the water, so that you could kill them with a whip. The woman gave him leave to go and he set off, promising as requital that all he took should be the widow's.

Up to ten o'clock, fact bore out Sam's prophecy, but as it struck that hour, Ned Crosbie entered the billiard-room. He was in the act of turning out of the darkness, after calling in vain, when Tom Fitzgerald came in. The two knew one another, lights were turned up, and they began to play.

Ned Crosbie was a large, round-shouldered, powerful young man, with very dark complexion, brown eyes, shaggy beard and moustache, an explosive, hearty energy, and a laugh very wholesome to hear.

Tom Fitzgerald was low-sized, dapper, polite, with fair skin, blue eyes, and light hair. Ned was greatly admired by the women, and Tom had the reputation of being one of the most obliging and polite of young men, and most useful at bazaars, private theatricals, evening parties, picnics, and dances. They were utterly different in appearance, port, and sentiment; and yet a poll of female votes would have shown very few of a majority for either. The delicate and timorous leaned towards Ned, the robust and daring towards Tom. Without admitting it to themselves, each in the other saw a rival. In a town like Glenary, there is room for no more than two favourites; these two were the heroes of the borough, and a little jealousy between them was no more unnatural than between rival toasts.

The game went on. Ned was by far the better player. To-night, in addition to his superior skill, luck aided him, for he fluked abominably. This put him into hilarious spirits. He laughed at his good fortune, and hummed snatches of humorous songs. Now Tom had little or no appreciation of humour, and a very acute perception of defeat, particularly defeat at the hands of Ned, and by flukes. He changed his cue five times, uttered mild maledictions on the balls, table, and light. Gradually he became a mass of misapplied chalk, animated by spleen. When Ned stood in front, he struck the balls with all his force, in a vague hope that they might fly over, and, say, permanently disfigure his opponent. He sought to console himself by reflecting that Ned was growing stout, and this too, with a dangerously short neck. At length, being completely overwhelmed by a fluked six-stroke of Tom's, he threw down his cue, and declared he could play no more.

"You're in bad form to-night, Tom," said Ned, folding his shirt-sleeves across his chest, shaking his legs, and smoking in placid triumph.

"Awful," returned the other laconically, clearing out his pipe with tyrannical vigour.

"You seem in bad sorts. Anything annoying you?"

"No."

"Because there's nothing so bad for billiards, especially pot-strokes, as an uneasy mind or bad spirits. I'm in capital spirits to-night. I'm going to have a delightful day to-morrow, old boy; a day enough to set a fellow up for a whole month."

"Are you? Where?" demanded Tom suspiciously, at the same time lowering his brows, and desisting with his pipe.

"In the country."

"In the country!" echoed Tom, with a surprised and unquiet glance, adding, after looking with one eye into the bowl of his pipe and than hammering it against the edge of the table. "So am I."

"You!" cried Ned with a slight start. He fixed his eyes firmly on the other as he asked, "And where are you off to?"

"Oh! only a few miles," replied Tom carelessly, now perfectly at his ease, for Ned seemed piqued.

Here was a coincidence, for Ned's excursion would not lead him more than a few miles also. "What place?" he asked, frowning slightly.

"It's a secret," Tom returned, with a look conveying as plainly as words, that there was a lady in the case. "But it's west," he added, by way of giving mystery and poetic atmosphere.

"And I'm going west too," the other volunteered in a low voice, unfolding his arms and looking stern defiance at Tom.

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom with affected unconcern. He took up a cue and dodged with the balls.

For some time both were silent. At length Tom asked in a tone of hollow politeness, "Of course you start early?"

"Oh, no! Not early. You're off at dawn I suppose?" scornfully.

"Not early," and here the conversation ended, and the two left and went home.

The forenoon was fresh and jocund, with clear blue sky and sweet pure air. Overhead the larks sang, in the bushes the thrushes piped. At the outskirts of the town, the main road leading west was intersected by a lane running north and south. Ned Crosbie was walking leisurely down the lane towards the main road, when his eyes suddenly filled with unpleasant intelligence, and he exclaimed to his thigh, as he struck it violently, "I'm swamped, but here's Fitzgerald!"

At the same moment Tom saw him, thrust his hands deep into his pockets, turned a little green, and looked critically at the sky, as though it were not half up to his mark.

"Going for a stroll?" cried Ned, when the two were within speaking distance.

"Ay," answered Tom, removing his critical dissatisfaction from the sky to Crosbie.

When they met they did not shake hands, but stood looking in opposite directions; one with his eyes fixed on the southern hills, the other with his buried in a clump of fir trees on the northern plain. Thus they remained for a while, presenting an appearance of dogged stolidity, which would have befitted two convicts being photographed before receiving their tickets-of-leave.

Neither cared to speak first. Neither cared to be the first to move. A dark suspicion lurked angrily in both. Tom at length cleared his throat, took his hands out of his pockets, looked at his watch, and invaded silence with a Brummagem yawn, followed by "Lovely day."

The experiment was bold but unsuccessful; it drew only, "Beautiful for this time of year."

Tom felt with humiliation and bitterness that his adversary had gained a decided advantage by adding the qualification respecting the season. It indicated masterly and unperplexed observation, coupled with complete self-possession. He pushed somewhat hastily at his enemy's front. "Of course, for this time of year. You can't expect July weather in April."

Ned could not be driven in. His lines continued perfect. He threw cavalry on the flank of his adversary's advanced column with, "One could expect it, but one oughtn't."

Fitzgerald looked full in Crosbie's face; Crosbie looked full in Fitzgerald's. It seemed as though conversation were at an end, and action impossible.

"If he stood there until the evening of the last day, I'll not move to let him know where I'm going," thought Tom.

"He must pass me. I'll never pass him," determined Ned.

While matters were in this posture, a voice, not belonging to either, suddenly broke in upon them with:—

"Hallo, boys! is this you? who would have thought of meeting you here?"

Ned and Tom turned round to find Mr. William Prendergast approaching from the country end of the main road. Both uttered exclamations of surprise. Both looked at Mr. Prendergast, as though the other were fifteen miles away, or an inarticulate lamp-post. Ned thought, "This ruins my little plan." Tom thought, "This spoils my game;" and to both these mental speeches each added a profane addendum.

Mr. Prendergast, a low-sized, stout, ruddy-faced man of fifty, came up briskly, and, giving a hand to each, cried in a hearty voice, "I'm so glad to meet you both. How are you?" Then, looking at his watch, "It's only eleven; we don't dine till four. I'm going to Glenary to look after the horses. I sent them in. Mr. Gough wanted to see if one of them would suit him. Let us keep together, and go back together."

So here was the mystery disclosed. The two young men were to spend the day at the same place. They were both bound for Four-mile Glen House. They were to sit at the one table, and look at the one girl, and each had been thinking of having the last at least to himself; for widower fathers of fifty don't look much at daughters of twenty, or don't look in the same way as unmarried men under thirty. Ned set his teeth and growled. Tom smiled a sickly smile and remained silent. The three, following the main road, reached Glenary in a short time, Ned supporting the burden of conversation with Mr. Prendergast.

Now it so happened that although Mr. Prendergast was short and florid, his daughter Ellen was neither. She was rather tall, with a pale round face, very sweet to look at in May, for something in it harmonised with the white-robed hedges and the odour of the hawthorn. Her forehead was smooth and calm; her hair dark brown, and her eyes were open wide and blue. She had, besides, a lithe, delicate figure, wonderfully tempting at the waist. Ned and Tom had met her frequently at parties in Glenary, at the band, the flower-shows and bazaars, and each had, in his own opinion, got so far that only a favourable opportunity was wanted to realise success. There had been no lack of hints to her of the desperate condition in which both the suitors lay, but up to this April morning neither had declared himself openly; who could in crowds where people were chattering about the O'Hallorans' presumption in having a crest painted on the back of their jaunting car, or the prospects of getting up a picnic to the lakes, or the relative values of cinder or sand soils for strawberries, and such like mundane vanities?

Mr. Prendergast's beasts were stabled at old Forrister's posting establishment in Dublin-street, and it so happened that Mr. Gough, who wanted to see them, arrived at Forrister's at the same moment as the three men. The four retired to the stables, and Mr. Gough went over the beasts with judicious care, apparently favouring a large-boned, weight-carrying hunter. Mr. Prendergast had considerable local fame for breeding this kind of cattle. Mr. Gough had considerable local fame for wealth and a most minute knowledge of its value. He wished to see what the hunter's action was like. Mr. Prendergast suggested that the stableyard was a poor place to test a hunter in, and that Dublin-street was not much better. Anyway clap a saddle on and let him (the horse) show as much as he could. His pace wasn't great, but as to fences, he'd do anything you liked at them, and would carry sixteen stone all day through ground as stiff as birdlime.

The ostler, a shrivelled-up man with a lame leg, saddled and bridled the beast, and led him to the gate. "I should like to see him," said Mr. Gough, "under the heaviest weight we can muster."

Mr. Prendergast looked around. "Would you," he asked, turning to Ned, "mind cantering him up and down the street?" Ned did not exactly like the idea of doing ostler's work, but he liked very much the

idea of doing anything which might propitiate the owner of the horse. He coloured a little and gave a hasty consent. Tom smiled a half malignant, half envious smile, but said nothing. Now Ned was not by any means a good horseman, and the beast was impatiently pawing and snorting. It entered vaguely into Ned's mind that it might be well for the cause at heart if he broke a leg or an arm in the interest of Ellen's father. It would bind the man to him and draw the sympathy of the girl. But suppose he broke his neck, there would be that grinning, green Fitzgerald, whom, he had no doubt, was in love with Ellen too, on a clear road. With a shrug and a mental "faint heart never won fair lady," he mounted and went at a walk down the street.

There were not twenty people visible, and not a single vehicle. Glenary is built on both sides of the main road going west towards Dublin, and Dublin-street may be said to lead in a straight line to Four-mile Glen.

When Ned got a hundred yards away he pulled up. He could see the other three men standing at the gate of the yard. The horse was very restive and fresh, and he felt anything but easy in his mind. But he sought with all his power to persuade himself that he was perfectly calm; he invented a conviction that he was quite accustomed to this kind of thing. In order to prove to himself, and, above all, to show his rival that he was perfectly self-possessed, he dropped the reins on the horse's neck and leisurely lit a cigar. Then, setting his teeth, he put the hunter into a canter, which gradually increased to a gallop as he approached the group at Forrister's.

Just as he passed them the horse whinnied, suddenly threw up his head, dropped his ears, and, shooting his neck violently forward, dashed off at a terrific rate. It was a miracle the rider kept his seat. He instantly leaned back and pulled with all his might; but with distended eyes and trembling flank and snorting nostrils the horse kept on, seeming rather to increase than diminish his pace. People and shops and houses and lamp-posts flew by as though earth had gone mad, and were rushing to destruction. Now he was under the Westgate and plunging through the suburbs; now he was on the open road; now he passed O'Neil's mill; anon the mile post. Every moment he expected destruction.

The reins lay useless in his hands. He crouched and clung. The horse snorted now and then, but never shortened his neck or abated his speed.

There was Kill chapel; in a minute he was over Oak Glen bridge; anon he shot under the dark avenue of Kingcor. That was Daily's farm, and here came the Grange!

Beneath him the road swayed and billowed like a cream-coloured sea; around him the trees flicked, and by him rushed the whistling air.

That was the second milestone, and now above him rose the ruins of Moire!

He had but one idea—to cling, and cling, and cling. His cigar was firmly wedged between his set teeth; his eyes were dim. He felt a horrid stiffening of his joints; and he knew that if this stiffening increased he should fall and be shattered.

Past the ruins of Moire and up the hill of Argehea. That was the third milestone, and here, almost at the same instant, was the open stream of Culumb's Well! Through the stream and up the height; down the steep side into the valley.

He began to feel as though he had been riding at this rate for a long time, for days, for weeks, for years. All interest in his fate was leaving him. It seemed to him as if it had been ordained he should ride thus for ever and ever, and be beyond the power of exercising any control over himself.

His head began to swim; objects grew blurred and indistinct. Mechanically he kept in the stirrups. Mechanically he held himself low over the beast's neck.

What! Could that be the blacksmith's? and beyond in the hollow by the wood Four-mile Glen?

That sight—the sight of her home—galvanised him into full consciousness: with a desperate hope he threw himself back, leaning his whole weight on the bridle. He felt the bit come home, and, just in time to lessen its shock, stooped forward, pulling firmly but not violently. The pace fell to a gallop, the gallop to an unsteady trot, then to a rickety walk. Finally the horse stopped altogether within a short distance of Mr. Prendergast's gate.

For a minute Ned had not the power to alight, but sat wondering and trembling on the panting hunter. Then he dismounted. The horse all covered with sweat and foam, and shaking in every limb, stood with drooped head, breathing as though each breath would be his last. Holding the reins Crosbie led the palpitating beast, and passed by the backway into the yard of Four-mile Glen House.

John, the groom, came to him, and seeing the condition of horse and man, uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"He ran away with me, John," exclaimed Ned, and then he told the man what had happened.

"Faith, you're not much better than him yourself, sir," John said at the end of the narrative. "I must look after the baist, but you want somethin' to settle your mind. There's a flask of the master's hangin' on the harness rack, in the coach-house, an' I think there's a dhraim of somethin' good in it. Go in, sir, an' help yourself."

The suggestion was a wise one, and a little while after Ned had followed it he felt more tranquil. With the return of calmness came reflection, and Ned thought that as accident had swept him to the Four-mile Glen House, he could not do better than try to turn that accident to account.

"Is Miss Prendergast in?" he asked.

"I'm not sure, sir, but I think she is. Go round an' thry."

By this time he had removed all the dust from his clothes, all the anxious look had disappeared from his face. The almost unexpected delivery from destruction had brought reaction, he felt a cheerful buoyancy. With a light step he left the yard.

In less than half an hour, and before the others had returned from Glenary, he came running back, crying out to John when he saw him, "Oh, John, I'm so glad!"

"For what? because Angus ran away with you?"

"No—yes—that is, only he ran away with me, I shouldn't be —" a pause.

"Be what, sir? You do look quare. Maybe there was more than a dhraim in that flask?"

"No, no; not that. The fact is, John, old fellow, I've found out that Miss Ellen doesn't hate me?"

"An' did it take you till now to find that out. Why any omadhawn could see that all through—don't you think she ever lifted an eye of likin' on Fitzgerald. An' do you know I have found out what made Angus run away."

"You have! What?"

"I don't think you knew it, but when you came in you had a cigar in your mouth."

"Well?"

"Well, it wasn't hardly burnt at all, but the poor baist was; for under the peak of the saddle there's a fresh scaldin' burn on the poor craychuro's back."

"By Jove, the head of the vesuvian must have fallen there."

"That's it. The burn was more pain than harm. Maybe the head of that vesuvian helped you to make a match."

"Ha-ha-ha! old fellow, there's something in that."

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CHRISTMAS ON THE ICE—"A LESSON OF LOVE."—DRAWN BY DOWER WILSON.



THE BOROUGH MEMBER.

BY BYRON WEBBER, Author of the "Chronicles of Heatherthorp," &c.

SIR RUPERT PEACHEY, BART., Pink Candidate for the Borough.

PHILIP CARTARET, ESQ. (his agent.)

ISABEL CARTARET (his "one fair daughter.")

HARRIET (a servant.)

SCENE:—CARTARET'S Drawing Room. Tea ready on the table. Costumes—present day. Time—evening.

Enter CARTARET.—Harriet! Harriet! I say (consults his watch). The Express will arrive in ten minutes. It has never been so much as a second behind time since the Chairman of the company settled here (glances at newspaper). Ah! this is splendid. Mr. Figgins, sir, I recognise in you that uncommon creature, a flexible editor. Figgins craved a few hints for a leader. I sent him one—an order for 20,000 copies of Sir Rupert's address to the electors, and an advertisement that long for insertion until further notice in the most expensive page of the *Weekly Pulverizer*. Behold the result! Half a yard of leader. I shall carry Sir Rupert easily enough; but I also want to marry Sir Rupert. I mean I want that exasperating daughter of mine to marry him. Sir Rupert Peachey, Baronet, M.P., and Lady Peachey—a noble line for a list of distinguished visitors; but the line wants knotting. Women were not so aggravatingly perverse in my soft and sentimental days. He was smitten—I'm sure of it—and if she was *not*, why in the name of feminine pigheadedness does she so persistently abuse him? Indifference is dumb. For my part I would sooner undertake to manufacture a baker's dozen of M.P.'s than

assist in producing one matrimonial match. (Enter HARRIET *leisurely*.)—Well?

HARRIET. Did I hear you call, sir?

CARTARET. Singular as it may seem—you did; although, mind you, it is so long since, I should not be surprised if you told me it appeared like a dream.—Ask Miss Cartaret to step this way. (Exit HARRIET.) That young person suffers from an overdose of light light-headed literature. Is a martyr to a periodical investigation of the illustrated recreations of a bloated aristocracy. (Enter ISABEL.) Pause, my dear; likewise pose. Enchanting! You are a credit to The Cause. You wear the candidate's colours in your face.

ISABEL. Papa, don't be absurd.

CARTARET. Not a bit of it. The prettiest of pinks, I assure you. Now, Miss Cartaret, deign to inspect me. Do I look like the matchmaking dragon of society, eh?

ISABEL. Papa—

CARTARET. Because—such is my present character.

ISABEL. Oh dear—

CARTARET. In more senses than one I am a political agent.

ISABEL. Yes, of most despotic, and worldly-minded views.—I do wish you would let that tiresome topic rest.

CARTARET. Isabel, I must decline. Consider my parental responsibilities. And—views? They are liberal, my darling, widely liberal. Are they not bounded on the—the—well, let us say East by a Baronetcy, on the West by an auriferous jointure, on the South by a

Wallis Mackay del 1875

shower of pin-money, and on the North by—by—well, the most incomprehensible daughter that ever plagued fond papa? Now, my dear child, let us be serious. You know my desire.

ISABEL. Yes, I know (*petulantly*).—You wish me to fascinate him.

CARTARET. No. To complete his capture.

ISABEL. The capture of a Baronet who is half a fool.

CARTARET. Isabel! Though for that matter, what does the inheritor of an ancient Baronetcy—recollect, my dear, an ancient Baronetcy, not the brand new article,—the owner of grass and timber, and potential coal-mines, and fashionable streets, and so forth—I say, what does he want with intellect? He can buy it.

ISABEL. A Baronet who considers all women not old enough to be his grandmother (*draws affectedly*) amusing—merely amusing—nothing more—I assure you.

CARTARET. Tut—tut. Isabel Cartaret, am I an idiot?

ISABEL. You are my papa.

CARTARET. Answer me frankly. You did not dislike him when you met at Scarbro? Come, now, you confessed to feeling an interest in him then?

ISABEL. A sort of interest.

CARTARET. But you did?

ISABEL. Well, yes; at a distance.

CARTARET. What do you mean? Be more explicit.

ISABEL. I mean, that distance lent en—durance to the view of Sir Rupert Peachey—in a cricket match. His figure is passable, and attired in knickerbockers, and otherwise adorned by the conspicuous costume of the Zingari Club—he may be gazed upon without disgust. He has fine eyes—if he knew how to use them; good teeth, the shape of which is familiar to his friends; and a nose that a sculptor would appreciate—upon anybody else's face. I am not so absurd as to object to money—except when it is offered as a substitute for brains. You say his title is not new, but that makes no difference in a world that will soon swarm with Baronets. A successful sugar-baker or an aspiring tea-dealer who yesterday got his title for opening a bridge or turning on a drinking fountain, is just as good—is as much a baronet in fact as he who derives his title from the family vault.

CARTARET. Isabel, Isabel!

ISABEL. How could I help noticing a good-looking *jeune homme* who, according to my enthusiastic papa, bowled like a fiend, and fielded at cover-point like a wild cat, and hit round to square leg (whatever that operation may be) like a steam engine? Who—

CARTARET. Isabel, you are incorrigible!

ISABEL. Who is a first-flightman in the Bramham Moor, and a marvel of dexterity at polo, and—yes, I remember reading the inflated account in a Scarbro' paper—who once actually pulled a little boy out of the sea.

CARTARET. You are too bad! He saved the lad's life.

ISABEL. I beg his pardon. I had forgotten the ornamental details. But I do not forget everything.

CARTARET. Sir Rupert Peachey is as brave as a lion.

ISABEL. Have I not read somewhere that your magnificent lion shrinks from a miserable little mouse?

CARTARET. And have not I read somewhere about a lion that fell over head and ears in love with a woman, and thereupon made an ass of himself? Pray be serious—if you can. Sir Rupert takes an interest in you, of that I am convinced, and I want you to—to—like him. Promise me to disguise your dislike, which, mind you, I honestly believe is feigned, until you have seen more of him. Come now, is it a bargain?

ISABEL (*after a pause*). Yes. But stop! I must have my own way.

CARTARET. ("She will have her own way—whether I say 'yes' or 'no.'") *Aside*. Certainly; only be meek—and—merciful. He lunches to-day with an old friend who is coaching him in his speech to the electors. He may arrive at any moment. You can do the honours or remain invisible as you please, while I step down to Hyde's to arrange about the deputation. (*Exit CARTARET.*)

ISABEL. Love Sir Rupert Peachey? Ridiculous! Hate him, perhaps. And yet,—no. If he were not such an inanity—and easily-blinded papa never saw him flirt at Scarbro' with that vulgar despot of aspirates, Miss Arabella Shingler. That alone would—well he had better take care!

Enter HARRIET, showing in SIR RUPERT.

If you please, sir, master will not be gone long. He has just stepped round to Mr. Hyde's, the currier's, to arrange for your reputation.

[ISABEL retires, still in hearing.]

SIR RUPERT. Very sorry—that is to say, it's not of the least consequence.

HARRIET. I can call Miss Cartaret.

SIR RUPERT. Preposterous domestic. Do nothing of the kind. I desire solitude. (*ISABEL laughs merrily.*) I say! This impertinence—leave the room. [*Aside.*] Let me see, Jack's last words of advice were "My dear boy, cultivate the lower orders." I cannot commence too soon. She may be a vote. I will canvass.—Look here, when I said leave the room, you know, I did not mean at that precise moment. Oblige me by remaining. You don't happen to have a vote for this borough, eh?

HARRIET. Goodness gracious, no, sir.

SIR RUPERT. Goodness gracious, no, sir. And why not? "The individual withers—and the vote is more and more." (*ISABEL laughs again.*) Eh? This won't do, you know. [*Aside.*] Talk about free and independent electors,—this remarkable menial could not be more free and independent if she owned a borough full of votes. Have you a father?

HARRIET. Alas! no, sir; he is no more.

SIR RUPERT. Ah! to be sure. Charmed to hear it, I assure you. I don't mean that, you know. [*Aside.*] I am charmed to hear it, though, I shan't have to canvass him. Mother? But she's of no consequence. Brother? [*HARRIET solemnly shakes her head.*] It is very sad, I'm sure. Those long and lingering illnesses, you know. But you have a—sweetheart—a young man? Eh? Ah, I congratulate you [*enthusiastically shakes her hand.*] Householder?

HARRIET. He is not an ousholder, yet, sir, but we do indulge in hopes of starting housekeeping next Michaelmas.

SIR RUPERT. And why not? Indulge by all means. It's an economical luxury. Now tell me what is the political profession of—

HARRIET. John William, sir! He is a journeyman butcher, sir, and he votes as he is bid.

SIR RUPERT. Handmaiden of handmaids! Your journeyman chopper shall rise in his profession. His shop shall become an emporium. Consider it done. From this moment your John William is a Royal Purveyor.

HARRIET. Oh, sir, how can I sufficiently thank you?

SIR RUPERT. Why, by [*drawing out a bundle of MS.*] informing him and urging him to spread the information amongst his down-trodden brethren of the cleaver—that if Sir Rupert Peachey has one conviction more indelibly engraven on his throbbing heart than another conviction, it is the conviction that no land, however famous it may be in arms, in art, in literature, in commerce, in song, and—in the unapproachable duration of its criminal trials, can be expected to maintain its greatness on the funeral-baked meats of a dim and distant clime. Inform Mr. Williams that the warmest feelings of a patriotic breast, the noblest sensibilities of a soul that is alive—alive—yes, tremblingly alive, that is to say not dead, have been ploughed and harrowed by the persistent efforts of a niggardly, I will even go so far as to say a bone-scraping Government, to thrust the mysteriously mutilated mutton of the antipodes down the needy national throat.

HARRIET. Beautiful! It is lovelier than the *Family Herald*.

SIR RUPERT. Yes, beseech your William Jones to lose no time in apprising his brethren, the free and independent electors of this beaming and benignant borough, that when, as a philanthropist as well as a Briton, I call to mind the vast numbers of unfortunate inmates of the poor man's club, I mean of course the poor man's union workhouse, who have been compelled to sustain existence on an incomprehensibly alien compound like that, when I gaze abroad and contemplate this prepossessing, this enchanting, this [*sees ISABEL, who has gradually approached.*] Eh, yes, to be sure, madam, I—that is.

ISABEL. Good evening, Sir Rupert, I expect papa here momentarily. He is most anxious to see you.

SIR RUPERT. Shall be only quite too much delighted, I assure you, Miss Cartaret. [*After a pause.*] That was a jolly time at Scarbro', eh? [*Another pause.*] I hope you have been all right since then. Gone everywhere, seen everybody, and all that sort of thing, you know. (*Aside.* I wonder if she heard much of my speech?)

ISABEL. Thank you, Sir Rupert. Then you have not forgotten us. SIR RUPERT. Forgotten you, by Jove, no! (*Aside.* She is handsomer than ever!) The fact is, now, you will not be too merciful if I tell you, eh? You snubbed me so dreadfully at Scarbro', it was quite impossible to forget.

ISABEL. I, Sir Rupert!

SIR RUPERT. To be sure. Ha! ha! Don't misunderstand me, pray: I liked it, I did, I assure you. You see I have been a good deal humbugged—that is, you know—spoilt by,—well, when you took me down it was something like a shower bath, it braced me up, you know; and upon my word I liked it afterwards, when I came to think of it, as I very often did. (*Approaches table and gazes earnestly at a photograph.*)

ISABEL. [*Aside.* Can papa be right, after all?—This is dangerous ground, Sir Rupert. I must warn you off.] Sir Rupert [*rather loudly*].

SIR RUPERT. Eh? yes. I beg your pardon. I was thinking—

ISABEL. Shall I guess your thoughts? [*Aside.* Now to ascertain the truth.]

SIR RUPERT. Come, I say. You are not a witch, you know.

ISABEL. Do not be too sure of that?—Beware!

SIR RUPERT. Ah! well, that is true. [*Sighing.*] I am not so sure, after all. You say you can divine my thoughts?

ISABEL. Yes. Now confess. Were you not recalling those pleasant days in Scarbro' twelve months since. Thinking of HER.

SIR RUPERT. Extraordinary! This is what do you call it?—necromancy. By Jove, so I was.

ISABEL. I told you to beware of my witchery.

SIR RUPERT. [*Aside: ruefully.* If the candle could speak, that is what it would say to the moth.] Yes?

ISABEL. You left Scarbro' suddenly?

SIR RUPERT. I did. Went off like a successful rocket.

ISABEL. [*So did she—Aside.*] Would you think me very rude if I asked you whether there was not a sentiment—I mean a sort of romantic reason—for your hurried departure?

SIR RUPERT. Not at all. There was nothing in it, I assure you—although it did seem rather singular, perhaps.

ISABEL. (*Eagerly*) Yes?

SIR RUPERT. Listen to the legend. I was out swimming one morning, when I happened by the purest accident to lay hold of a young rascal of a boy who had floundered beyond his depth. He might have reached the shore (I daresay he would) without my assistance, but—I could swim, you see, and he could not,—and so I pulled him out.—That is all.

ISABEL. But, Sir Rupert, your sudden departure?

SIR RUPERT. Oh, ah! yes. Why, you must know a reporter fellow came to my rooms and made a long story about my—my—the muff called it heroism. Fact. This ridiculous person implored me to furnish him with full particulars of the thrilling incident. I thrilled him! I cut the interview precious short, I can assure you. But it was no good; the indefatigable gentleman straightway manufactured a legend, the equal of which you never read, even in a Christmas Annual. Then the youth's mother came, and a number of moist sisters, who got rid of a lot of tears, and would insist on kissing my hand.—The little boys in the street pointed me out to the cheap excursionists.—The cheap excursionists whispered, that's him! that's him! and followed me about in crowds. I was ashamed to go out of doors. Well, now you know all this was dreadfully trying, but I was getting almost injured to it when a deputation of emotional tradesmen, headed by an eloquent cheesemonger, waited upon me, and actually beseeched me to exhibit myself at a public meeting in a chapel in order that I might receive a testimonial—a medal or a soup ladle or something of that kind.—I shudder to think of it. My endurance was at an end. The worm turned—I left for London by the next train.

ISABEL. (*Who has arisen and gradually approached him during the preceding speech, stands for a moment and then resumes her seat.*) [*Aside:* How I have wronged him!] You under-rate your bravery, Sir Rupert.

SIR RUPERT. Now, I say! you are laughing at me now?—It's awfully kind of you, though, if you are not. (*Aside:* Is she laughing at me? Hang it, I wish I did not feel such a fool. And we were getting on so capitally. Just like my luck!)

ISABEL. (*Aside:* There now, he has lost his tongue. Dear me, how dreadfully silly I do feel, to be sure. What an interesting goose it is after all. *Approaches table to reach her work, but is suddenly anticipated by SIR RUPERT.*)

SIR RUPERT. Allow me.

ISABEL. Thank you. (*She resumes her seat.*)

SIR RUPERT. (*Pausing in his approach to her, and playing with the work in an absent-minded manner.*) Do you know, Miss Cartaret, I am getting dreadfully old.—I shall be thirty next June,—fact, I assure you. It is an awful bore to have to represent the family Borough, you know—I used to think that getting married would be as great a bore, but now—those were jolly days in Scarbro', were they not? Only somehow I never could talk to you then, I am at a loss to say why, for I feel that I like talking to you now, and, and—

ISABEL. I beg your pardon, Sir Rupert, will you take a cup of tea?

SIR RUPERT. Thanks. But pray don't trouble on my account.

(*Aside:* Confound it! All my hopes drowned in tea. I shall never relish that beverage again! In another minute I should have proposed.)

ISABEL. Your tea, Sir Rupert.

SIR RUPERT. Thanks—thanks (*puts the work in his pocket, in the tail of his coat, and hastens to take the cup from ISABEL.*)

ISABEL. Pray be seated, Sir Rupert.

SIR RUPERT. Thanks, yes (*sits down, but rises immediately with a suppressed groan and drops the cup.*) I beg your pardon, really. A thousand pardons. How abominably careless I am. [*Walks backwards endeavouring to get rid of the work and comes into CARTARET'S arms.*] 'Pon my soul, I beg your pardon, Sir.

CARTARET. Pray do not mention it. Harriet [*enter HARRIET, who gathers up the fragments of the cup*], a cup of tea, my love. Be seated, Sir Rupert; I am delighted to find you looking so well, and very sorry indeed to tell you that I am the bearer of bad news.

SIR RUPERT. Ah?

CARTARET. We are not going to walk over the course after all. The Advanced Thought party are in the field with a most mischievous candidate.

ISABEL. Advanced Thought, papa, what is advanced thought?

CARTARET. Um. I am not sure that I can tell you. Let me see. Next year's strawberries, my dear. Delicious fruit, I dare say, but scarcely available to-day. The Advanced Thinker, prefers the turtle of the future to the red-herring of the present. We have favoured this kind of thing since Mr. Culpepper Sorrel pitched his tent here.

SIR RUPERT. And who the deuce is he?

CARTARET. Alas! alas! no tenant of yours, Sir Rupert; he is a distinguished herbalist, whose infallible horehound candy and never-known-to-fail stomachic bitters are only a little less popular than his awakening orations. He is the self-appointed agent of your absent opponent.

SIR RUPERT. The devil he is—'pon my word, Miss Cartaret, I beg your pardon.

CARTARET. She will forgive you, Sir Rupert. Now Culpepper the crafty must be circumvented.

SIR RUPERT. Yes, of course, but who is my opponent?

CARTARET. An agitator named Smith. Fortunately the great man is divided, I may say sub-divided, in his allegiance. No fewer than three constituencies yearn to embrace him. He is to telegraph his final intentions to Sorrel this very night. Oh, by the bye, I forgot to mention that Mr. Sorrel is at this moment perched upon the topmost step of the market cross haranguing an excited multitude by torchlight. His denunciations of yourself and family have so far been both severe and picturesque.

SIR RUPERT. Insolent ead!

CARTARET. One of the penalties which are inseparable from parliamentary distinction, my dear Sir Rupert, nothing more. Nobody minds how candidates revile each other—except the candidates.

SIR RUPERT. The question is, what is to be done?

ISABEL. Of course you will begin by horsewhipping Sorrel.

SIR RUPERT. Most decidedly. (*Aside:* Superb creature!) At once.

CARTARET. Stop, stop, stop! Horsewhip him! Rather invite him to dinner. In fact, treat him with elaborate courtesy. Cheap mar-

tyrdom is the Advanced Thinker's best card, but it can always be trumped by politeness, which is just as cheap.

ISABEL. Cheap hypocrisy you mean, papa.

CARTARET. No, my darling—electioneering oil.

SIR RUPERT. Well, then, what is to be done?

CARTARET. Issue another address. At once. Outbid the great Smith for the votes of the eccentrics. Proclaim the equality of the sexes. Cry, Down with masculine monopoly!

ISABEL. Perhaps, papa, Sir Rupert may not deem the privilege of writing M.P. after his name a sufficient excuse for such a sudden change of sentiments.

CARTARET. My dear child—you do not understand—does she?

SIR RUPERT. Mr. Cartaret, although I am sorry to differ with you, I must say that Miss Cartaret appears to understand me—in this respect at least—perfectly.

ISABEL. Thank you, Sir Rupert. I ought not to interfere in this consultation. (*CARTARET holds up his hand deprecatingly.*) Nay, papa, I will speak, but I should lose all interest in Sir Rupert's success, and I do wish him to win, if—if—I thought him capable even of entertaining your advice. If I were he, I would stick to my colours, win or lose. (*Exit.*)

CARTARET. Well, of all the young marplots I ever saw or read of, that daughter of mine is the worst.—Sir Rupert, I hope you may never be plagued by a spoilt daughter.

SIR RUPERT. (*Aside:* There is one spoilt daughter I should very much like to be plagued with.) Ah! well, just so; but, look here Cartaret, you can send in my resignation.

CARTARET. What do you mean?

SIR RUPERT. Strike out my name.

CARTARET. I am more in the dark than ever.

SIR RUPERT. Consider me scratched for this engagement. The political bat is a noble animal and very useful to man, but if I am to go into Parliament, it must either be as bird or beast; that is what I mean. The great Smith may walk over the course.

CARTARET. I am d—d if he shall; I will fight the Borough myself sooner, and as for that daughter of mine, if I—

SIR RUPERT. You mean to say if you were a melodramatic idiot, which I am happy to believe you are not, you would play the part of a modern Jephtha, cut her off with a shilling, and be a curse to your kind for the rest of your existence. But, look here (*walks resolutely up to CARTARET*), suppose I relieve you of that responsibility.

CARTARET. Eh? what?

SIR RUPERT. (*Aside:* Now for it.)—Have I your consent to marry Miss Cartaret—if she will have me?

CARTARET. (*Aside:* What, already?) Marry my daughter? May I ask, Sir Rupert, if she has given you any reason to suspect that your attentions would be acceptable?

SIR RUPERT. Reason—yes—I mean no. Never mind, she shall; at least she will. I say, I am not such a fool as I was down at Scarbro'. I am another being.

CARTARET. I believe you are—I be-lieve you are—nay, I am sure you are. [*Enter HARRIET.*]

HARRIET. Please, Sir, Henry, from the *Black Lion*, sir, says Mr. Hyde wishes to speak with you very important, sir, at once.

CARTARET. Very well (*exit HARRIET*). Excuse me for two minutes.

SIR RUPERT. But you have not answered my question.

CARTARET. (*Bowing gravely.*) Sir Rupert Peachey, your application shall have my best attention. [*Aside.* He shall represent the Borough. If Hyde and I cannot manage that business, may I—be appointed Smith's agent, and receive no fees. *Exit.*]

SIR RUPERT. No House of Commons for me. I must marry and settle. Ah! I will pursue Cartaret and insist on an answer. [*Exit.*]

Enter ISABEL.

Oh, dear! I almost betrayed myself. Papa was right; his is a noble nature, and—I think I could cure his eccentricities. But that Miss—Miss—Shingler. Was it a serious engagement? I would give anything to know!

(*Enter SIR RUPERT, speaks aside.*)

Why should I wait for his consent? I have surely arrived at years of discretion (*takes the MS. of his speech out of his pocket and throws it out of the window*). There goes a proof of it. So perish my dreams of parliamentary distinction. Ah!

ISABEL. Oh! Sir Rupert, have you forgiven me?

SIR RUPERT. Certainly not, most certainly not. How could I? I had nothing to forgive. Miss Cartaret, I have retired from the contest.

ISABEL. What does papa say?

SIR RUPERT. Well, he does not accuse me of insanity; but I can imagine what he thinks. You appear amazed. Miss Cartaret (*takes her hand, which she makes a feebly futile attempt to withdraw*)—nay, permit me. I have something more to say—pray do not interrupt me, and, above all, don't laugh, or I shall never find courage to conclude. Ever since we met at Scarbro'—I have loved you! (*Draws a deep breath of relief, and mops his brow with his handkerchief.*)

ISABEL. (*indignantly*). Sir Rupert Peachey, this language is not for my ears. It would, I should imagine, be more welcome to those of Miss Shingler.

SIR RUPERT. Miss Cartaret—Isabel, dear Isabel! is she the sole obstacle? You do not reply—you smile and cast down your eyes. Darling—I am sure I may call you my darling—she was married to my old chum, Jack Cumber, of the Blues, three weeks since.

ISABEL. (*faintly*). But there is papa.

SIR RUPERT. Papa! Who cares for him? besides—

CARTARET. Never mind, Sir Rupert. He can put up with an incomplete sentence. Although in this case it looks uncommonly like a sentence of banishment. Nobody does care for papa—on occasions like this. Do not apologise, Sir Rupert. Explanations are unnecessary, my dear. He did ask me first. (*Enter HARRIET with a note.*) Pardon me for one moment. Ah! any arrivals?

HARRIET. There's the Corporation band in the back garden, and the drums and fifes is on the lawn, and the bellringers is in the hall, and they want to know, if you please, sir, how many triple bob majors you will have, and—

CARTARET. That will do? [*Exit HARRIET.*]

SIR RUPERT. What does it all mean?

CARTARET. That you discarded your notes ten-minutes too soon. (*Exhibits MS.*) That would have furnished Sorrel with a pretty text to preach from! You shall be an M.P.—the Fates have willed it. Smith retires, and it is you who walk over the course.

SIR RUPERT. Shall I gratify the wishes of an eager constituency, Isabel?

ISABEL. (*Laughing*). You may as well; otherwise the consequences might be serious.

SIR RUPERT. Be it so; fortunately there is nothing more to be done.

CARTARET. I beg you will disabuse your mind of that idea. There is a great deal more to be done. The free and independent electors outside, who are now assembling in hundreds to hurrah themselves hoarse, fraternise with the band, and obliterate my flower beds, they must know nothing of this engagement until the other is over. Then—

SIR RUPERT. I am already nominated, you know.

ISABEL. Yes, papa, twice; once by me.

CARTARET. (*Petulant*). I know all about that. But business is business. He must be proposed.

ISABEL. But he has proposed.

CARTARET. And seconded.

SIR RUPERT. Is there never a seconder here?

CARTARET. You will have to make a speech.

SIR RUPERT. What a bore! Where are my notes? (*Cheers outside.*) They are gone. Oh! you have them.

CARTARET. Never mind the notes. Do you hear those cheers? Fancy yourself on the hustings. Ladies and gentlemen, the candidate will now favour us with his views.

ISABEL. Do it will be practice at any rate. (*Shows the MS., which he vainly endeavours to secure.*)

SIR RUPERT. Free and independent electors of this beautiful and blessed Borough, it is impossible on this occasion for me to do adequate justice to a subject of such stupendous importance as the—and all that sort of thing, for, as you observe, I have been deprived of my notes. (*Hear, hear, from ISABEL.*) But I will say this. (*CARTARET: Cut short the preface.*) I will say, notwithstanding the interruption of my honourable friend here, that I agree with the honourable gentle-

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CHRISTMAS IN THE THEATRE—"MEPHISTO BEHIND THE SCENES."—FROM THE PICTURE BY E. GRÜTZNER.

By PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER, F. HANFSTÄNGL, MUNICH.

WINIFRED'S VIGIL.

(CHRISTMAS IN THE CORSES.)

BY H. SAVILE CLARKE.

TIME, the year 'Fifty one. Place, the lawn, Weston Hall.
Persons present, the squire and two sons, each one tall
And straight-limbed, as the Westons have been since the day,
When one stood with Duke William in battle array,
And gained as befitting reward for a Knight,
Weston Hall as the outcome of Pevensey fight.

"Weston Hall," as I write it how clearly I see,
The old home that looked down o'er the meadow and lea;
It stood on the side of a wood-covered hill,
And the pine music round it but rarely was still;
It tower'd o'er the Champaign that stretched far and wide,
And what wonder a Weston looked on it with pride;
For as far as your glance o'er the scene could command,
Was the manor of Weston and theirs was the land.
And on many a farmhouse o'er the lintel you'd trace
The chevron that told of the shield of their race.

There's the house, and the Master was worthy to rule,
Where his ancestors reigned, of the real good old school.
He was truly an old English gentleman, proud
Of his house and his lands, but that might be allowed;
Proud, too, of his lineage, and proud of his wife,
And proud of his daughter, the joy of his life.
He was proud of his hunters, his dogs, and his guns,
He was proud, you may swear, of his two gallant sons,
He was proud of his ancient and unsullied name,
But prouder than all of preserving his game.

The game laws! 'Tis, certes, a red flag to raise
In the eyes of some men in these Radical days.
We know how in Kingsley's bright ballad came leaping
The merry brown hares where a dead man was sleeping.
A poacher who came, as it seemed, to much grief
For preferring the taste of a pheasant to beef.
For it's simply rank balderdash rabid and wild
To talk of men poaching for wife or for child.
Yet we hear men stand up for the midnight encroacher,
And pleasing emotion is spent on the poacher,
Who is simply a thief oft of dissolute habits
Who instead of your purse, prigs your hares and your rabbits.

It was plain that "a something" had ruffled the squire
For his blue eyes lit up with an ominous fire,
He seemed to be talking in accents of blame
As he roundly declared, 'Twas a scoundrelly shame
That a gang of trained thieves should the county invade,
And on all the preserves make a regular raid.
They had been to his neighbours and borne off the spoils
And still had evaded the law and its toils.
But the squire when he heard the sad tidings that morn,
Had risen in wrath and had solemnly sworn,
As sure as his name was Ralph Weston that he—
A magistrate's chairman and active J. P.—
Would be even with all these despoilers, and should
These men dare to rifle Westonian Wood,
To carry off either a hare or a pheasant,
They'd meet a reception more warm than was pleasant.

II.

Miss Winifred Weston was fair and was merry,
The daintiest, dearest, most dimpled of pets:
And she wore with much grace what our friend Ashby-Sterry
Has called in the neatest of verse, "Pantalettes."
She was just at the age when the school bread-and-butter
Commences to pall on a sensitive mind,
And Love was beginning to take down the shutter,
Revealing the wealth of pure passion behind.
I own that the metaphor's far too commercial,
Forgive it this once while I tell that her eyes
Were more bright than a planet, an Airy, or Herschel,
Could ever discover in depths of the skies.

And who was the Knight who had come to provoke
The tiniest *soupsçon* of love e'er he spoke,
And pleaded his cause with the eloquence known
In its mighty effect to true lovers alone?
O'er the hills to the right of the fair Weston wood,
Another old Hall with its broad acres stood
And the county knew well that the Weston and Leigh
Had fought side by side both by land and on sea.
'Twas a friendship "as old as the hills," though folks said it
That statement geologists hardly would credit.
For though I'm not certain concerning the fact, I'll
State boldly the hills saw the gay Pterodactyl.

And young Edgar Leigh was the suitor who came,
For Winifred's eyes set his young heart aflame.
And she for her part was by no means disdainful,
And wondered that some maidens found loving painful.
She gave herself up to love's magical dream,
And resisted no more than a leaf on a stream;
While the course of true love ran as smooth as could be,
With Winifred Weston and gallant young Leigh.

Of course they'd their "tiffs," those small breezes which shake
The water to ripples on Love's smoothest lake.
A quarrel of lovers we've all heard before is
The prelude to sweet "integratio amoris."
So after each breeze why they kissed and made friends,
And their quarrels in this way had orthodox ends;

And it seemed to them both life was really too sweet
With love's roses so lavishly strewn at their feet,
Yet a day was to come before many days fled,
When the vision was o'er, and the roses were dead.

III.

The squire has called his merry men, and summoned them to-night,
To search with him the greenwood through, and guard his game aright.

In strange disguise, lest prying eyes their errand should o'ersee,
They wander out at eventide to seek the trysting tree.

The moonlight gleaming through the leaves shines chequered on the
sward,
The while through early hours of night they keep their watch and
ward:

And naught they hear except the sound of soft winds in the pine,
And far off murmurs answering back from all the long sea-line.

And can it be their quest is vain, that no marauders tread
The woodland glades near Weston Hall when Autumn leaves are red.

The heavy clouds come o'er the moon, what sounds are those which
break
The midnight silence where the leaves so ominously shake?

A stealthy tread, some lurking forms, and yonder stand the foes,
Now, who'll be foremost in the fight, who'll be the first to close?

The Westons charge, and with them Leigh, all keen to do and dare,
When, suddenly, a shot rings out upon the startled air!

A deadly aim the murderer took there beneath the trees,
And dead upon the sod there fell the heir of all the Leighs.

IV.

There's a glade, by far the fairest, in fair Weston forest yonder,
Where the fern leaves are the greenest, and the lordliest oaks have
grown,
And the traveller who passes through the woodland, stops to ponder
On a cross and the inscription on a white memorial stone.

It tells in simple language how the gallant lover perished
At the early dawn of manhood in that fierce ignoble strife,
And how all the dreams of happiness sweet Winifred had cherished
As leaves from wind-swept pathways, vanish'd out of her young life.

And should you chance to stray there when the even-star is shining,
A vision of fair Winifred will flit across your sight,
For though her wan lips long have ceased from outwardly repining
She comes to pray upon the spot on each recurrent night.

'Tis said she sees strange visions, and that when her tears are starting,
A ghostly form is with her, and she knows her Edgar Leigh,
That he clasps her and he whispers of a day of no more parting,
And passes like a spectre when the sunlight strikes the sea.

So runs the tale at Weston, and the woodland pathways lonely
Are shunned by all the villagers when comes the eventide,
And the leafy archways echo to one gentle footstep only,
When poor Winifred is pacing on the spot where Edgar died.

We leave her to her vigil,—and to sorrow's heavy burden,
The bright hope of her young life past,—all maiden dreaming o'er,
Remembrance of lost love sometimes is true love's only guerdon;
And dearer that remembrance than a thought of love once more.

THE TWO CHARLIES.

A STORY OF STROLLING SHOWMEN.

BY C. H. STEPHENSON.

TELL a story! No, sir, I have too much veneration for verity. Oh! an anecdote—that's what you mean—eh? Well, once upon a time—"Oh! oh!"—Nay, don't groan like that. I mean a many years back—"Ho, ho, ho, don't make it too many years, old boy." Well, if you don't laugh at me, I won't. When I was a youngster—will that do? "Yes, yes," chorused the group seated round the crackling yule-log one Christmas Eve. I then related the following story. I don't mean tarrididdle—for lying is an abomination that all mankind should avoid—but, alas! does not.

To my tale. As a lad the Drama was my delight—its professors the *Dit* of my idolatry—West's Toy Theatre my chief amusement. Oh! the getting up of my plays and pantomimes—the gatherings of school-fellows and giggling girls. Can I ever forget them. Never. My days of worship at the shrine of reality were, alas, few and far between. Why? Because Bedale could not boast of a regular theatre. Its Temple of *Thespis* was, like the great original, ambulatory, moreover, fitful in its visits. Yet, at times, the merry music of drum, and pandean pipes resounded through the market-place, and the welcome cry went forth, "the Players are come."

Yes. Messrs. Woodker and Walford have arrived with their booth—the Clown is digging up the stones to make room for the foot of the king-pole. Hamlet and Polonius are carrying portions of the pavilion, *yelept* shutters, from the broad four-wheeled waggon that will hereafter do duty for the stage. Lady Macbeth and Desdemona are seated on a wardrobe box mending rents in the roof, *i.e.*, the tilt. Beneath the waggon, destined to serve as the outside-stage, might be seen a stripling of sixteen or eighteen—he is on his knees beating crooked nails straight on the head of a sledge-hammer, used for driving iron stakes into the ground. His youth encouraged me to address him. "Are the players likely to make a long stay?" "Yes, we're going to have a month's private business here." At this news I inwardly rejoice, yet feel sorely puzzled with the phrase "*private business*." Pushing my inquiries still further, I soon become learned in the use of *struts, rafters, ridge-poles, brackets*, and other extraordinary lumps of wood necessary to the erection of the People's Playhouse.

On the top of a coke fire, glowing in a queer-looking stove made of bits of iron, and called a lamp fire, stood a saucepan. "Charlie," cried Lady Macbeth, "just lift the lid off that pan and tell me if it boils." Simultaneously Hamlet and the youth at my side cried out, "all right." "Are you both called Charlie?" I asked. "Yes," said he, as he bounded towards the pan in question, which, by the way, narrowly escaped being upset by the two Charlies trying to clutch the lid at the same moment.

On Charlie, jun., returning to his nail-beating, I ventured to inquire

if the pan contained glue, thinking that viscous body was necessary to insure the stability of the *show*. "Lors bless you, no; we only use glue for the properties and scenes, and to stick on our whiskers with. We make *size* in that pan sometimes; but just now it's got a *Jemmy* in it."

Ignorant of the full meaning of his reply, I began to *finesse* with the subject, but Charlie, jun., was too shrewd for me, and in a tone slightly tinged with irony, informed me that *Jemmy* was a *slang* term for a sheep's-head, and that *Jemmy* was undergoing the process of being converted into broth for the dinner of himself, Hamlet, and Lady Macbeth. Expressing astonishment that they did not conduct their culinary matters within the privacy of their lodgings instead of a public market place, he coolly informed me that they never hired lodgings, but slept in the booth; that is to say, himself, Hamlet, and Lady Macbeth, who, as it turned out, were married—to be sure the rest of the *troupe* lodged in various parts of the town, but Charlie and his friends had something else to do with their money. What was that something else? You shall have it in Charlie's own words—

"You see, sir, we were at Wetherby lately, but business was very bad there: we shouldn't have cared much for that, though, if little *Morsel* hadn't been taken ill and died there. *Morsel*, sir, was the pet name of his little girl." He here pointed to Hamlet. "Both of 'em were very fond of her, sir, so was I for the matter of that, for she was so like a little sister I had left behind me at home, and I loved her deeply for that very likeness. Well, sir, when she died, we hadn't money enough among us to pay a regular undertaker for a coffin, and as they didn't like the idea of her being buried as a pauper, I went to a grocer's store and begged an empty soap-chest, and made poor *Morsel* a coffin out of it myself."

"You!" I exclaimed, taken by surprise. "Yes, sir. I'm handy with carpenters' tools, and a good reason why, I'm a runaway apprentice from a cabinet-maker. But the worst of all, sir, was the parson refusing to bury our tiny *Morsel*, unless he was assured of the regular fees. In vain we promised to pay him as soon as times mended. Oh! it was awful hard to bear was that, sir, but I plucked up a bit, and I said to him" (Here he again pointed to Hamlet), "come along with me, Charlie, come along, I said, dragging him on the road to *Spofforth*, a small village a few miles off; here we sought out the curate, oh! such a nice old gentleman, with a head and face that would have done first-rate for Polonius or King Duncan, without any making up. Well, sir, we told him our trouble, that is to say, I did, for poor Charlie was broken down with grief. The clergyman listened to me to the end, said many consoling things to us both, and finally consented to bury poor *Morsel* the next day, relying on the promises we had made to remit the fees in full as soon as fortune smiled on us again. Well, sir, next day, Charlie and I set off with the corpse of poor *Morsel*; Lotty there (he here pointed to Lady Macbeth), was too much cut up to follow.—*Morsel* was her only child,—besides there wasn't a bit of decent mourning among the lot of us, except her stage black velvet, covered with black beads and bugles, so it was arranged the two Charlies should go by themselves. We did so. I carrying the frail coffin my own fingers had fashioned all the way, thinking of its contents, and the dear little sister I had left behind. At times I fancied I could feel and hear them both pulling my hair and calling me naughty *Charlie*. When it was all over, sir, Charlie and I made up our minds to live in the booth until we had saved money enough, not only to pay for her grave, but to raise a little headstone to her dear memory, and please God, sir, we shall do it, for we are pinching and screwing and saving every penny. Yes, sir, and if our benefit only turns out well here, Lotty yonder shall have a black gown and crape bonnet to wear in memory. No, sir, we shall only be able to sit down contented, if not quite happy, in furnished lodgings once more, when we know and feel that poor *Morsel* does not lie in a pauper's grave." My story is ended. Their benefit *did* turn out well; in fact, it was what actors call a bumper, by whose means I'll leave you, dear reader, to guess. Suffice it to say, that before the two Charlies left Bedale their honest aspirations were accomplished.

FLEXMORE'S DEBUT AS A DANCER.

BY J. A. CAVE.

AT Bayswater there formerly stood a place of amusement called Wales's Tea Gardens, which included a theatre, formed out of a very large room attached to the house; here nightly during the summer months, farces, operettas, and concerts were given; in all of these I took prominent parts. My benefit coming in due course, it occurred to me that a ballet played by juveniles would be an attraction, so I waited upon Flexmore, with whom I had been associated for some time before, having played with him as an 'Imp' in a pantomime at the Apollo Saloon, Yorkshire Stingo, a large theatre situated in the New-road. I asked him to play the *Simpkin*, or comic lover; he readily assented. Well, the night came—the bill is now before me—and, as his engagement prevented him from attending a rehearsal, the lines of the action had to be talked over just before the curtain rose for the ballet. Having explained what was to be done, I warned him that at the end he would be asked to dance. He immediately took me up by saying, "I can't do a dance, I have never danced in public in my life, and I only know about three steps."

"Well," I said, "do those, but you can't possibly play *Simpkin* without doing a comic dance."

At last I got him to consent. When the ballet comes to a conclusion, and all are made happy, the lover asks (of course in action) the rejected lover (*Simpkin*) to join in their festivities, and give them a dance. Poor Flexmore pulled a very long face, and came forward, and to the tune of "Roley Polley" began his three steps, and true enough, at the end of the third he stopped, and taking up a birch broom that had been used in the piece, he struck an attitude, and shouting "Richard's himself again!" rushed off the stage, leaving the audience screaming with laughter at the unexpected finale. Such was the first appearance as a dancer of the artist who was destined to take the first position in Europe as a buffo dancer.

I have endeavoured to describe the first three steps he danced in public. I will now try to describe the occasion of his dancing his last three steps. I should premise by saying, that although Flexmore was deservedly the most popular clown of his time, from the fact of his being a finished dancer, he made *Clown* a thoroughly different person from what we had been accustomed to since the days of Grimaldi. Instead of the most artful thief, we found an agile young fellow, who appeared to get into all sorts of scrapes from sheer mischief; at the same time he was so active in his fun, that he was never in one place a second at a time. Hence it was that detractors declared he was not a clown, but a mere tumbler, and that but for his dancing and "knocking about," he would not have been tolerated. However, those who saw poor Flexmore enact clown the last season he appeared on the stage at Drury Lane, must have been convinced that when he could no longer *knock about*, as his thoughtlessly unfriendly critics used to call it, he could keep the audience in a roar of laughter by the very quietest comic action, and in a manner that even Grimaldi could not have excelled. For, recollect that at this time he was dying of rapid consumption, and he had scarcely strength to walk, and although I knew the state of health of poor Dick, and grieved with all his friends for him, yet it was literally impossible to sit and watch his extraordinary fun (although he sat at a table during nearly the whole of the scene) without roaring with laughter. And he kept the whole house screaming with laughter the whole time, thus proving what a gentleman who accompanied me, and who had known Grimaldi well, admitted that that great clown was equalled by Flexmore. In fact, when Flexmore could not be Flexmore, he became Grimaldi. Well, on this occasion the audience (not knowing his state of health) called for his usual dance—I should say he only played in one scene—which he attempted, but could only manage *three steps*, so that the first and last time I ever saw Flexmore on the stage as a dancer, he began and ended with three steps. I may add that a better hearted man never lived. He was all kindness to his brother pantomimists, his pocket was always open, and to his mother, who was left husbandless when poor Dick was quite a little boy, he was the best of sons, as his constant anxiety, from childhood, was to take every shilling he could earn to her.

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TAVISTOCK HOUSE, FEB. 11, 1873.

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(Signed) CH. GOUNOD.

SIR JULIUS BENEDICT.

2, MANCHESTER SQUARE,
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GENTLEMEN,—I entertain the highest opinion of Mason and Hamlin's Cabinet Organs. The tone is mellow and free from reediness, the touch excellent; and altogether I believe these Instruments are destined to be very popular in this country.

Yours truly,
JULUS BENEDICT.

Messrs. METZLER & Co.,
37, Great Marlborough-street.

EDWARD J. HOPKINS.

JAN. 22, 1872.

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EDWARD J. HOPKINS,
Organist to the Hon. Societies of the
Inner and Middle Temple.

Messrs. METZLER & Co.,
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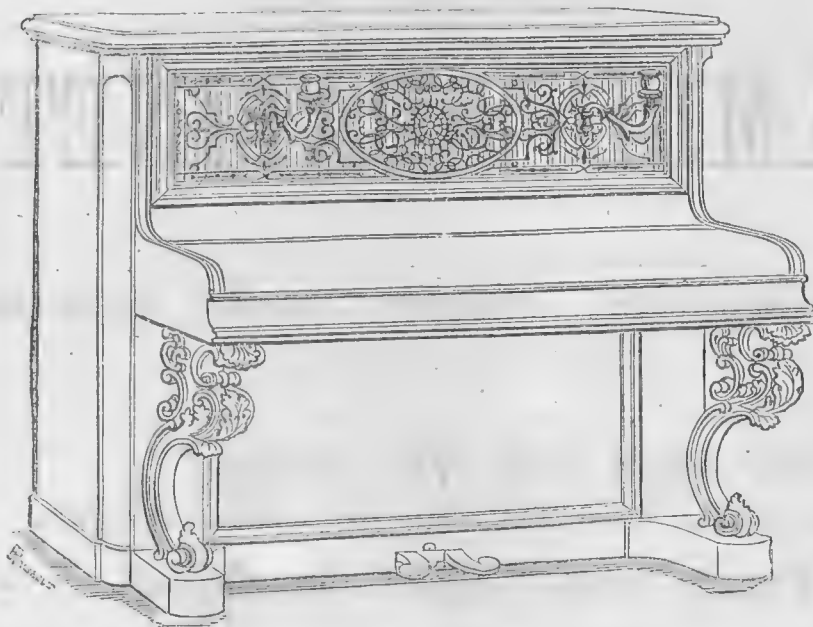
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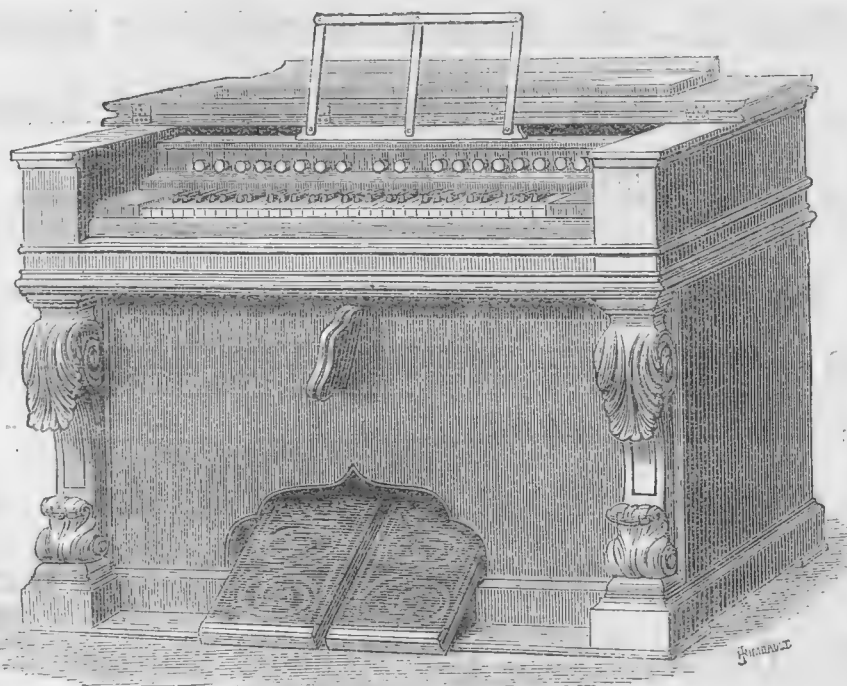
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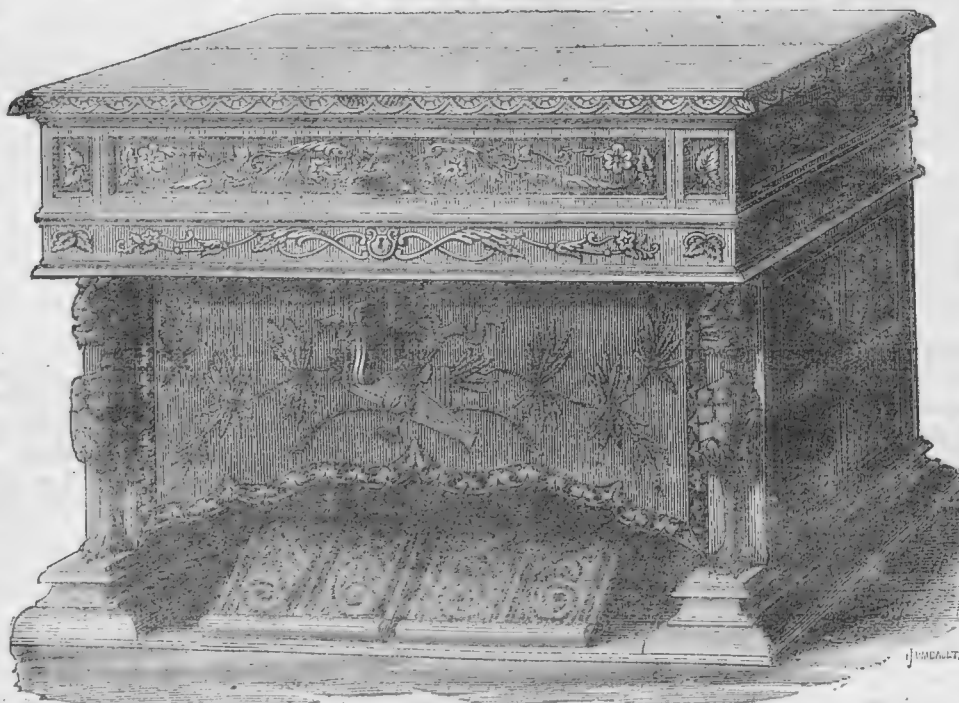
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BY "OUR CAPTIOUS CRITIC."

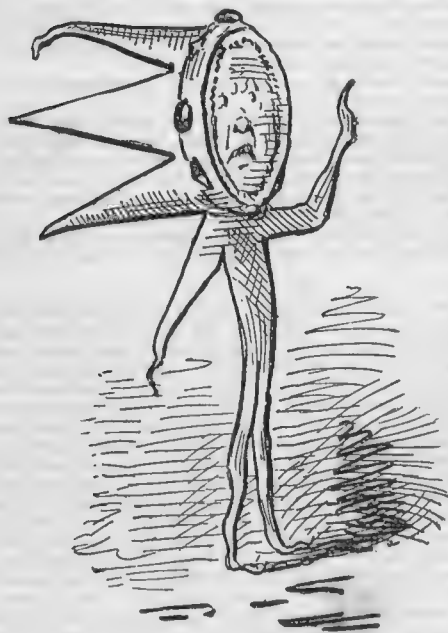
No. I.

THE TRAGEDIAN AND HIS CROWN.



Next tragedian who had played
A King all night in pomp arrayed,

And stamped and roared as in a fit
Vainly to move a callous pit;
The curtain down, with face of gloom,
Sought hastily his dressing-room.
Straightway with many an oburgation
He vented there his irritation.
The audience first his ire salutes—
They all were dull insensate brutes
Devoid of soul; more fit, by half
To gape and grin at "penny gaff,"
Or grovel, breathing equine airs,
In circuses at country fairs—
"Their vile applause I value not"
Quoth he. "Then why so very hot?"
His dresser dared to interpose,
Whom answering with oaths and blows
His anger high and higher rose,
He turned his spleen upon his clothes.
That robe was always in his way,
These boots the things that damned the play,
This sceptre nearly poked his eye in,
These trunks gave way when he was dying,
And lastly his imperial crown
He tore from 's brows and dashed it down.
Yea—even with sacrilegious toe
The emblem spurned that lay full low.
One of those spikes which indicate
In diadems degrees of state,
And sparkle bright with jewels rare,
Was bent and bruised beyond repair.
Th' injured Crown, in just disdain,



Addressed him in the following strain:—
"Conceited fool! and dost thou deem
Because thy fortune 'twas to seem
For two short hours tricked out by art
Th' exponent of a kingly part,

That off the stage, the drama over,
The world in thee can now discover,
That regal mien, that noble mind,
The poet in his play designed?
No—as without the poet's words
Thy language nought refined affords
Witless thy brain thy fancy dull
As parrot's tricks or apish skull;
So, also, when thy robes are off,
And I the Crown at whom you scoff
Have ceased to hide thy narrow brow
A vain uncultured braggart, thou;
A very ordinary man,
A simple, silly charlatan."
Th' enraged Tragedian, quickly cool,
Said—

"MORAL—
Well—I am a fool!"

No. II.

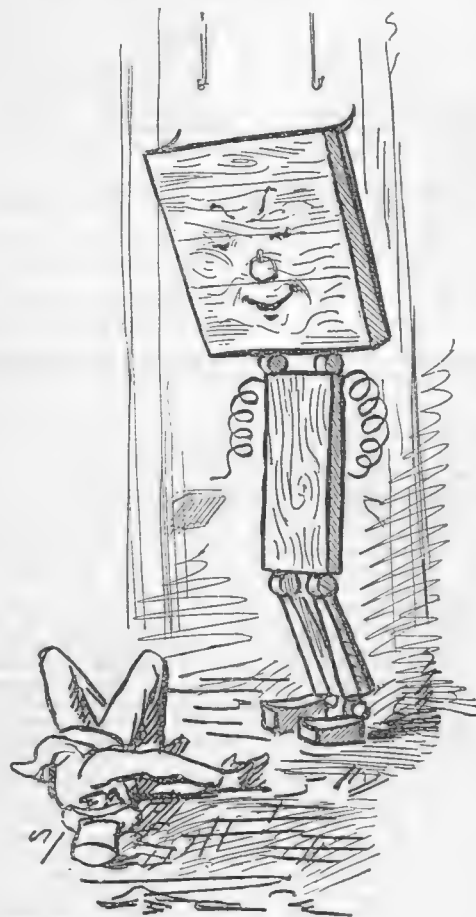
THE MANAGER AND THE TRAP-DOOR.

A MANAGER of mushroom growth,
Who scarce could speak without an oath,
Though dreaded by his actors poor,
Aroused the wrath of a Trap-door.
An unpretending plain machine
The Trap—despised by gaudy scene,
That gay aloft looked down in scorn
Upon a thing so lowly born,
As on grey spider might the fly
So bright to-day, next day to die.
But, ah, while countless scenes had passed,
The Trap continued still to last.
It recollected (so 'twas said)
The resonance of Garrick's tread,
And still in memory could feel
The dainty footsteps of O'Neill.
The vet'ran who outlives his age
Hath more regrets his thoughts t' engage
Than all his pleasant memories
Can soften down the day he dies.
So our Trap-door, though well aware
That well-bred managers are rare,
Was by this last one so disgusted,
That all his nails and hinges rusted,
And made it a continual toil
For carpenters his joints to oil.
Yet cared he not a single rap,
When Manager said "Damn that Trap!"
What truly into 's nature sank,
And made him shrink in every plank,



Were the foul words the Manager hurls
At modest women and young girls.
Framed in an age (mayhap not chaste)
Whose speech at least was pure in taste.
His heart to wormwood in him turned—
T' avenge these insults now he yearned.
Th' occasion chanced: One Christmas time
There came to sing in pantomime
A frail girl-flower, all unused
To language coarse. A maid just loosed
From sweet seclusion. Darkly dressed,
She seemed by recent grief oppressed,
Mayhap a father, lately dead,
Compelled her thus to earn her bread,

As timorous as captured bird,
She started at the slightest word,
And nervous glanced the stage around,
Finding some fear in every sound.
Her moment come—her frightened heart
Her utterance choked and marr'd her part.
Like tusked boar on bleeding lamb
The managerial insult came.
'Twas foul, 'twas blasphemous, 'twas vile,
Half stunned the maiden stared awhile,
Then, as if shot, above her head
Threw up her arms and swooned as dead.
"On with the scene! Remove that wench!"
The scoundrel cries, with teeth that clench,
But at that moment chanced, the brute,
Right on the Trap to stamp his foot.
Unable to endure it more
The Trap gave way, and through the floor,
Full thirty feet the Manager
Fell, howling, never more to stir.
As heavily his latest breath
Was leaving him to dusty Death,
The Avenging Trap was heard to say
"At last has come thy judgment-day!"
By fraud raised from obscurity,
Illiterate as man could be,
Through falsehood thou contriv'dst to climb
To place and fortune in thy time;
Hated by all, yet held in dread
By those who looked to thee for bread.
The needy man thou madest to smart
And tortured e'en the broken in heart,
Who stood before her tyrant dumb,
As you loved cursing yours has come!
Ay, groan thou there a sorry sight,
Thou'st broke thy neck, and serve thee right."



MORAL.

If th is slight fiction can prevent
One Manager from giving vent
To needless oaths, methinks my rhyme
Not all in vain this Christmas time.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

THEIR idle hour they tread the stage,
Obedient to the prompter's call,
And there recite the well-conn'd page
As prelude to my Lady's ball.
Their lover meets approving glance,
Their "leading lady" wins bouquets,
The low comedian's funny dance
Gains indiscriminating praise.

An idle hour,—and yet who knows,
One little lesson it may give,
May teach more charity to those
Who only act that they may live.
Think how an actor has a heart
Like other men, with hopes and fears,
And often plays a merry part
With laughter wrung from inward tears.

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THE LEAP FROM THE MAST.

A THEATRICAL AGENT'S STORY.

BY W. W. FENN.

THEY had had the new piece in preparation at the "Sans Pareil" for more than a month. It was to be produced at Christmas, and it wanted but three weeks of that time when Shopland, the lessee, suddenly sent me to say that Furlong, who was to do the great summer-sault scene, had broken his leg at rehearsal. The whole play turned upon the incident of the great jump, and without it the piece would have been like *Hamlet* with the Prince's part omitted. Shopland was bound by heavy penalties to the author to produce his work on Boxing-night, and therefore wrote to me to say a substitute for Furlong must be got, and that within a week at the outside.

I was carefully posted in all that was going on in the provinces. It was my especial business to be on the watch for rising talent, so I instantly remembered the account I had heard of a wonderful fellow at Dumborough. What was required now was a rare compound: histrionic talent allied to thews and sinews—an acrobat who was also a Roseus, and here he was on my list. Not a few of the stars on the London boards owed their position to my introduction and Shopland's bringing out. So I wrote to him to say he should have what he wanted, and in another hour I was in a first class carriage on the Great Western line, for I foresaw in Mr. Reginald Calverton, of the Dumborough Theatre Royal, the man for my money.

Dumborough calls itself a city; it has a castle, a cathedral, and a town hall; the castle is in ruins, the cathedral would be better for restoration, and the town hall would not be missed if it were pulled down altogether. In half the streets of the place you might get in summer a very decent crop of grass; there were shops, but no one seemed to buy, nor did the tradesmen appear anxious to sell. There was only one big caravanserai of an inn: the old coaching inn, for Dumborough was upon one of the main London roads; but the business it did was of the mildest, like the beer at its tap.

"Stay the night?" the waiter asked me, with a sort of dejected incredulity. No one, clearly, ever stayed the night at the Bald-faced Stag, and the waiter looked at me, as if I were an escaped Communist, or a suicidal maniac flying from an asylum, when I replied that I should want both supper and a bed!

"Any amusements here?" I asked.

"Well, sir, there's the castle and the cathedral grounds, and—"

"The Theatre?"

"To be sure, sir—" Collingham's Lyceum—used to be 'Theatre Royal.' There's 'The Graveyard of the Ganges' on to-night, a fine piece, I can tell you, and young Calverton, him as was own son to Squire Oldacre down at Goldminster, who ran away from home, plays the Rajpoot warrior. Oh! it is grand, and Miss Floppy (Florence her name is), that's old Collingham's daughter (he's dead, but Mrs. C. keeps on the house), she does the hero-wine, and it's a sight for sore eyes to see her. They are all mad for Miss Floppy, the young sparks are, here, especially young Mr. Dunkley, the Mayor's son, he'll go any lengths, I have heard him say, but what he'll win her! Lor' bless you, she favours him no more than the rest, and a good job too, for he ain't much account, though he's got plenty o' money. Ah! she's a rare good girl, I'll warrant you, and they do say as young Calverton and she'll make a match of it yet, they act first-rate together, always."

The old fellow was wound up like an eight-day clock, and would have gone on as long, when we heard the clatter of hoofs, as some one rode sharply by the window into the inn-yard.

"Here, Silas, Luke, some of you, take the tit." Then, with an oath, "Ain't none of you awake?" If this isn't the dearest, worm-eatenest, mouldiest old crib—"

Hearing the voice, my talkative waiter started, and said, "Why, there is young Dunkley; talk of the—I'd best go and see what he wants."

Mr. Dunkley made known his wants for himself, by angrily calling for some gin and bitters, as he strode into the coffee-room where I was seated.

Not a pleasant-visaged youth, nor of engaging presence; as he stowed at me from under his hat, which he never thought of removing, I noticed his spotted face, wide nostrils, and heavy under jaw, and set him down at once as an idle, dissolute young man, one who had been spoiled probably from childhood, and, as he grew up, was allowed to run riot, a dung-hill cock lording it over all his companions.

I left him, therefore, to his gin and bitters, and having warmed myself and taken some refreshment, issued forth into the raw and misty twilight and sought out the Lyceum. The bills announced a change of entertainment nearly every night. This evening and to-morrow "The Graveyard of the Ganges" was the great attraction, but to-morrow the performances would be for the benefit of Mr. Reginald Calverton, and would conclude, by especial desire, with his celebrated drama, "The Pirate of the Pireus; or, the Leap from the Mast," which would be given for the twentieth and last time this season. I could have wished that this piece had been on to-night; it seemed to offer a better opportunity for judging of Mr. Calverton's powers than "The Graveyard of the Ganges;" but, as it was my cue to remain incog. until I had seen him, and as I had no time to spare, directly the doors were opened I secured a little pit box close upon the stage, and ensconced myself snugly in the darkest corner of it. After a while, a few yokels in the pit, half-a-dozen of the better class of tradespeople, amongst whom sat young Dunkley, in the boxes, and an unmistakable gallery of "paper," made up the audience. The gross receipts could barely have paid for the gas; probably nothing else was paid for, nor would the gas company have been so fortunate had it not possessed the power of shutting up the house by shutting off the light. Two fiddles, a flute, and a trombone, completed the orchestra; the decorations were of the seediest, the empty benches in the pit shone with grease, and the draperies of the boxes were tattered and torn. In truth, I was but little prepossessed; the play was badly mounted, and in the first few scenes supported miserably.

I promised myself a night of unutterable dullness, and was half asleep already, when a round of applause—not loud, the audience was too limited for that, but undoubtedly hearty—roused my attention—Miss Collingham had just come on. One look at her was sufficient to explain her popularity. I had seldom seen upon the stage a face and figure more striking. It was such a good face too; not merely handsome and regular in feature, but thoroughly good. Her large brown eyes were honest as the day; when she smiled it was with a frank heartiness that inspired confidence, almost friendship, at first sight.

As my box was so close upon the stage, I could watch her narrowly. It occurred to me at once that if to her splendid gifts of beauty were added the smallest scintilla of talent, she might certainly be developed into a complete theatrical success. I had gone in search of one thing, and had tumbled, quite by chance, upon another of infinitely greater value. She spoke; her voice was sweet as a silver bell, reminding me much of the tones with which Miss Helen Faucit, years ago, kept her audience enchained. She made her points well; her intonation was clearly marked, and her grasp of the character she was playing, such as it was, intelligent, not to say original. Her movements and her poses too were graceful, whilst she used her hands with great effect. "She'll do," I said to myself; "she's a nugget to be dug up and removed from Dumborough."

The play proceeded. The man, this young Calverton whom I had come down on purpose to see, performed one or two curious, semi-acrobatic feats, which were clearly interpolated to show off his tremendous vigour and activity; but his acting was not bad, and I saw he would quite serve Shopland's purpose in the emergency. I staid on, weary as I was, however, in my stuffy little box to see the last piece, a dreary burlesque, solely for the pleasure of watching Miss Floppy, who, of course, was in it.

Patiently I listened, through an act of interminable length, to commonplace periods, and puns spoken in the most commonplace tones, till the whole performance, growing more and more monotonous and dreary, assumed at length a shadowy, unsubstantial character, and I seemed to be gazing up, out of the narrow aperture of my box, which was just on the level of the stage, at a party of desperately dull ghosts playing a phantom show behind a dark and misty screen.

The weariness of the time increased, and seated snugly in the corner, on a low easy chair, with my legs up on another, I found myself constantly dozing; yet I waited on and on, inspired with the

hope of seeing more of Floppy; only when she was on the stage, did my interest revive, and by degrees it seemed as if her entrances and exits even were becoming as shadowy as everything else.

Suddenly I was sharply aroused by a sense of intense and acute pain—I had fallen to the ground; and starting up, now thoroughly awakened, found that I was in darkness, in some small place, gloomy, confined, and silent as a tomb. In a frenzy of horror, I put forth my hands, and felt a curtain, a coarse pall of curtain in front of me, and dragging it aside, a sickly burst of daylight revealed the fact clearly, that I must have passed the night in the little dust-bin of a box. The curtain I had pulled back was a part of the brown-holland hangings with which, when the performance is at an end, the cushions and curtains of the boxes are covered up. It had been lowered from the grand tier over the front of my little stage box, and thus concealed, I had escaped observation when the house was shut up for the night.

Surprised and startled beyond expression at the lapse of time, and my apparent oblivion of it, I doubted at first if I could really be still inside the theatre, for I had a sense so strongly upon me of having been but very lately in quite a different place. In spite of the details which now surrounded me, and which I distinctly realized,—the covered boxes, the orchestra, the stage cleared and deserted, save by the long coils of the fire hose brought up close to the float,—in spite of all this, I was haunted with a notion that I had been at sea, that I had climbed and clambered up somewhere, amongst masts and rigging, and crawled out upon the yards, only to fall, the victim of some terrible treachery, suddenly far into bottomless space.

But, although these vague and impalpable recollections continued to surge through my brain, I dismissed them—or sought to do so—as the mysterious vestiges of a dream that has but lately fled, and scrambling out of my crib, got up on to the stage. Here, as I made my way to the back, I saw standing in the wings three property masts, with cross-trees and yards, and high up in the flies wide canvas sails and other nautical gear. Could it have been these that had influenced my sleeping thoughts? I did not pause to consider. My watch had stopped at a quarter-past four, the morning was doubtless far advanced, to judge by the sun now piercing the skylight at the back of the gallery; all I thought of at present was how to escape from the theatre and get home to bed. Nothing but a latch protected the stage entrance, and a figure fast asleep in a chair in the doorkeeper's recess, was the sole protection against thieves, and the sole hindrance to my exit.

I was soon back at the Bald-faced Stag. The waiter did not think much of a gentleman who, ordering a supper and a bed, turned the meal into breakfast, and retired to his couch at eight in the morning. I was too stiff, cold, and miserable to care for his suspicious salutation; and, turning in, slept soundly till late in the day.

Towards afternoon, I strolled down to the theatre, and asked at the stage door for Miss Collingham.

"Oh! rot Miss Collingham!" growled the surly old doorkeeper; "I've suppose we've nothing to do but to take messages for Miss Collingham?"

Evidently Miss Floppy was in request, and her admirers importunate. I repeated my inquiry.

"She's engaged," replied the doorkeeper, snappishly.

"For long?"

"Yes, always: always was, always will be, to such as you. 'Tain't no use your coming here, we don't want no sparks loafing round;" with that, he turned his back on me, and retired into his den, without deigning to listen to my explanation that I had come on business, and business of importance.

I fear I mentally objurgated the old man, but I knew something of stage doorkeepers and their trials, so I went back to the inn, wrote a formal note to Miss Collingham, and despatched it with my business card, "Mr. Adolphus Truebill, Theatrical Agent," by the boots, directing the messenger to wait till he could see the young lady, and give my letter into her own hands.

I was just sitting down to dinner, when he returned. He had been obliged to wait till the young lady came down to the theatre for the evening's performance; but he brought an answer now to say that Miss Collingham would be glad to see me at any time before 10 P.M., behind the scenes, and would leave orders for my admission.

I finished my dinner quietly, and went down to the Lyceum about 9 P.M. The doorkeeper was very different in his manner—my name being pretty well known in the theatrical world—and the call boy was summoned to take me straight to Miss Collingham, whom I found dressed as a Turkish maiden, seated in a spare dressing-room.

She received me with that frank cordiality which is peculiar to theatrical ladies; a straightforward, "no nonsense" sort of greeting. I was equally frank.

"I have come to offer you an engagement," I said, without beating about the bush.

"I had hoped so, but where?"

"At the 'Sans Pareil'."

"In London?" she cried, with flashing eyes. How bright and beautiful she was! Was this merely pride and exultation at the prospect of finding herself elevated at last to her true sphere, or, was there more behind?

"Oh! then we can be mar—" she stopped suddenly, and blushed crimson.

"Pardon me," I said, significantly, "I would not, as a perfect stranger intrude myself upon your secret, but let me ask you, do you think I can see Mr. Calverton to-night?"

"Oh! y—yes"—she answered, hesitatingly and shyly, as if there were a hidden meaning in my words.

"I wish to speak to him," I continued, "on much the same business."

"A London engagement for Reginald? Oh! Mr. Truebill," and, this time, her eyes filled with tears;—"you have come here like a good angel, I think, to put an end to all our troubles; how can I thank you sufficiently!"

She took my hand in both hers, and pressed it so gratefully, that I was ready, even I, old Adolphus Truebill, was ready to enrol myself amongst those who were her devoted slaves.

"You will never regret it, I am sure," she went on, evidently prouder of his good fortune than her own; "he is so good, and so clever! he is an author, you know, he has written many successful pieces, he writes as well as he acts," she went on, looking up at me, as if this were the crowning act of cleverness: a playwright to her, took rank at once, with Shakespeare, Sheridan, and Molière.

"This is his piece we are doing to-night; the first scene is just now on, and he has contrived a wonderful sensation; you shall see the set; it is the rigging of a ship, and he jumps from the yard-arm into the sea."

"Ah! but that's not new," I interposed, "I've heard of that before!" All on a sudden, I felt as if I were approaching the verge of some extraordinary revelation!

"Have you though, really? Where?" she asked.

"Ay, indeed 'where?' that was the question. I could not for the life of me remember. But it was familiar, most familiar, with the unmistakable clearness of recent acquaintance.

"Tell me more of it," I said, a dim light beginning to break through my hazy recollection.

"The piece is called 'The Pirate of the Pireus,' or 'The Leap from the Mast,'" she said. "Mr. Calverton, as Jack Tarson, is shipped on board as a British Sailor, he knows nothing of the character of the vessel. They board and capture a Turkish Merchantman, and a girl is made prisoner,—I play the girl,—I am kept a close prisoner in the Captain's cabin, and subjected to gross insult, which Jack Tarson overhears, and breaks into the cabin to my rescue. At this interruption, there's a lot of business, and the Captain drags me to an inner hiding place and secures me. Then there is a struggle: the Captain gets the worst of it. Tarson escapes from the cabin just as assistance arrives. He makes for the rigging, and commences to climb with a vague hope of escaping certain death at the hands of the crew."

"Up the rigging to be sure!" All this was terribly familiar. I seemed to have but just heard it. "Go on, go on, Miss Collingham pray," I said anxiously.

"He is pursued, fired at from the deck, a ball strikes him in the leg, still he climbs higher, higher, then gets out upon the mainyard: there are real practicable masts and yards on the stage, you will see them, and there,—"

More light was breaking in upon me, all this latter business I had heard described, actually described before! but when?

At this moment the call-boy's words, "Miss Collingham called,"

interrupted us,—so, in some agitation, I went with her down to the wing.

There was a carpenter's scene on in front, and behind it was set the great tableau of the evening. I confess I was struck with its novelty and ingenuity; it occupied the whole of the stage, and represented the upper part of a three-masted ship, coming towards the audience with square sails set. The eye of the spectator met the flowing bellying-out canvas of the great foresail, surmounted by the straight stick of the foremast, and this obscured the lower part of the stage. Half way up, and a little behind, came the great mainyard and mast, above that, the cross-trees, and flying out bravely from the top, the black flag of the pirate, with death's head and cross-bones, whilst the whole was backed up and finished by the mizen-mast, other square sails and appropriate ropes and rigging.

A capital idea, an entirely new arrangement, and properly carried out on a large stage, clearly likely to prove a great scenic success: Shopland should hear of it. I took in the whole of this at a glance: a ship at sea—that was what they were talking about the night before on the stage! Yes, but the piece was not being acted. Who,—who then was talking about it? Who? Why some one and young Dunkley whilst I was asleep in the private box. If I was asleep, though, how did I hear them? or had I dreamt it all? What could it mean? I was puzzled, put out, worried beyond expression with a sort of sickening apprehension of coming evil. There was a mystery here, and the unravelment lay hidden away somewhere in the recesses of my brain, but at present utterly eluding all my efforts in pursuit.

"Now, just you keep quiet, can't ye? ye'll go and blow the whole gaff if ye keeps on talkin' out like that!"

Whose voice could that be, just the other side of the wing, where I was standing? Gruff, drunken, discordant, but very familiar, and whose was that, a second after, saying almost in a whisper, "Yes, but is it all right, Mannoch? Are you quite sure?"

"Ay, ay, right as ninepence," was the reply.

I looked round the corner of the scene. The first speaker was the stage carpenter—I knew him as by instinct—the second was young Dunkley.

And now, like the sun bursting through clouds, came the sudden *eclaircissement* of the whole mystery. I remembered it all. Last night, when or how I could not as yet quite tell, those very voices had struck on my ears. They had talked close in front of me, of this very scene, on this very stage; yes, clearly, they spoke of the climbing man in the rigging, the opportunity it would give for the accomplishment of their plan, when he should leap from the mast, and more, yet more, had passed between the two speakers, and, as recollection came back, strong as advancing daylight on a summer morn, the whole villany that had been brewing poured in with awful rapidity and increasing horror.

A short round of applause for the moment roused me. Miss Floppy came off at the wing where I stood.

"I've just been locked up," she cried, laughing, to me. "Now come round to the upper entrance, and you will be able to see Reginald take his great leap."

We moved up towards the back of the stage, just as the prompter's whistle told me that the "carpenter's scene" had opened, and that the ship in full sail was before the audience. Shots from the property pistol now followed in quick succession. I caught sight of the agile actor scaling the main-mast.

"Now," said Miss Collingham excitedly, "now you'll see—it's a tremendous jump!"

"For Heaven's sake," I cried, "tell me quick. Does he jump, does he jump down on to a bed, is it not? at the right upper entrance?"

"Yes, yes; but why do you ask?"

"Ah! I knew it, of course, there it is!" and my eye fell at this moment on a large feather bed laid ready to receive the man, as he would reach the ground, the common arrangement for such stage business.

"Come with me," I continued hurriedly, "it is a case of life and death. Come down below to the mazzaron floor. Don't hesitate, my dearest girl, pray come quick, come!" and I literally dragged her with me down a narrow staircase, which my familiarity with such places, told me led to the floor beneath the stage.

Meanwhile, above, the excitement rapidly increased. Shot followed shot, shouts and answering cries of defiance. The whole strength of the little company was crowding the wings at the front entrances, to keep up by their united voices, that buzz and hallooing, indicative of general excitement, incidental to sensational scenes of this nature.

A sharp yell of despair now rises above all!

"That's when he gets his wound," said Floppy, "in a moment he will take the great jump. But what on earth are you bringing me here for?"

"Where is the trap? where is the trap?" I cried in an agony, as we reached the dimly lighted, vault-like floor beneath the stage. "There is a trap, surely, just under where the bed is lying—a hinge trap, I heard them say, made for a special purpose last Christmas. Quick, quick, run on and show!"

The next second we gained the spot. My worst surmises were realized: it was wide open! the flap of the trap hung down, and the feather bed on which the actor was to alight was now supported only by a couple of thin laths, and thus, therefore, masked a yawning gulf. The devilish intention had been, of course, that Calverton, plunging straight into this, should mutilate, or perhaps kill himself amongst the machinery of the lower floor.

This was the plot I had overheard in a dream, as I had at first thought, but it was a waking, horrible reality, and it was all visibly before me again now, just as I had actually watched and heard the two ruffians concocting the means on the stage the night before, when, long after the performance was over, they imagined they had the theatre entirely to themselves. The young villain Dunkley, goaded to desperation by his rival's success with Floppy, and having access through his wealth and position as the Mayor's son, behind the scenes, had bought over the carpenter to compass Calverton's destruction.

These facts flashed through my mind like lightning, and the whole action in which I was now engaged took place in a quarter of the time it takes to recount. I was in a fever of agitation. Miss Collingham was also beside herself with terror at the sight of the open trap. But I called to her to keep up her courage.

"Now, now; there's not a moment to lose; come under it," I cried, "and help me to raise it."

Our united strength easily brought it into position, and I was about to shoot the bolt, when *thud*, down came the whole weight of a man upon my uplifted arms. But bravely had the sweet girl in an instant foreseen the situation and my difficulty. Her arms were raised also to aid me in resisting the shock, and our united strength was sufficient to prevent the bed from slipping through the trap.

The first jar of the fall being thus broken, we gently lowered the trap, and lowered the bed, with Calverton on it, in safety to where we stood.

"This 'ere is all along o' the youngster's being so arbitrary about seein' of it for himself. If he'd a left it to me, nobody would 'nt a knowed nothin' about it, 'stead o' which, what does he do but hides himself, and stays here until everybody's gone to 'splain to me what to do! just as if I, who have been stage carpenter, man and boy, over four-and-twenty years, didn't know how to loose a trap when it was wanted! Oh, dear no! that won't do, if you please, for him! He must have it all clear out before his own eyes on the stage to show me how we was to do it, and so he makes me stay on and meet him, when all the lights is out 'cept the fireman's, and to go over it agin and agin to make quite sure—a worritin' young fool. Then all this 'ere time there's a cove a' watchin' of us, and a listenin' to us, in the little box, as had been asleep, and overlooked when the house was shut. Of course young Dunkley paid me, paid me 'andsome, and that's more than anybody else does in this 'ere old theatre—how is a bloke to live?"

After this fashion, spoke the estimable Mr. Mannoch, when taxed with his share of the diabolical scheme, and when, under the influence of the promise, that, if he confessed, and turned Queen's evidence against Dunkley, he should be let off. The blustering swagger of Mr. Dunkley himself was very soon checked by this outspoken behaviour of his accomplice. Only through the amiable, and, as I think, misplaced leniency of the charming Collingham, did the rascally young cad escape the punishment which would surely have followed his arraignment before the county magistrates, on the charge of conspiring to maim and injure.

She interceded for him with Calverton, and as my visit to Dumborough would have the result of at once and for ever removing her and her lover from the neighbourhood in which the Mayor's son was a power in the land, it was thought better to let the affair drop. When, however, I, as is not unfrequently the case, am tempted by the fascinations of Mrs. Reginald Calverton to witness some of hers and her husband's triumphs on the London boards, the just pride in my *protégés* is always mingled with an additional satisfaction at remembering that but for me, the happy and successful pair would, in all probability, have been separated by some terrible and irretrievable calamity. But for my long sleep, or waking dream, or whatever the state in which I was, during that night passed in the private box in the theatre at Dumborough, might be called, quite certain it is that no one would have had a clue to the villany, and poor young Calverton, this well-born gentleman and ornament to the stage, would have broken his neck, and the accident have been attributed simply to the giving way of the trap.

RUDDLETON'S REVENGE.

SCENE:—*The Smoking-room of the Ranunculus Club. TIME:—About midnight. PRESENT:—A dozen men, who have just looked in after the Theatre. They are laughing over a newspaper, and reading bits of a tremendously savage critique on a comediante, called "Airy Nothings," by Mr. RICHARD RUDDLETON.*

"Pon my word, it's too bad, don't you know! I thought the piece was very good. Nice, and light, and amusing. This has riled the manager, however, I hear."

"Altogether bad form. Ruddy must have trod on the writer's corns somehow."

"They're going to withdraw the piece, I hear, on account of this notice."

Presently enters Mr. Richard Ruddleton—a pleasant little man, of about forty, with crisp, curling hair, and merry laugh, bright eyes, which sometimes had a most dangerous expression in them, and a rosy complexion, which fully justified his *sobriquet* of "Ruddy." He was a very wealthy man. He had been everywhere, done everything, and was a perfect Crichton in his various accomplishments. He was a true friend, but a bitter enemy.

"Hullo! Ruddy, my boy! what cheer? Seen this?"

"What *Noontide Nettle*? Yes, I should think so. I had seventeen copies sent me by various kind friends three days ago."

"Who's your friend?"

"Mr. Sydney Shunkle, whose new comedy is to be produced at the Bubble shortly."

"How long is *Airy Nothings* going to run?"

"It is not going to run at all, sir. It ceased to crawl this evening. I have just come from its funeral."

"What out of the bill altogether?"

"Out of the bill altogether."

"In consequence of this infernal *Noontide Nettle*?"

"In consequence of this infernal *Noontide Nettle*."

"What are you going to do? Will you bring an action—?"

"Nonsense! I've had my fun out of the piece. Never wrote a play in my life before. Quite a new sensation. Rather enjoyed it. Made the acquaintance of two charming young ladies, Miss Dora Dasolite, and Miss Fanny Froat, besides servants, guests, retainers, ballet girls, supers, and all sorts of delightful people."

"But what'll you do when Shunkle's piece comes out—slate it?"

"No, see it. I'm not a dramatic critic," replied Ruddleton; as he got up to leave, with a somewhat dangerous expression in his eyes.

"Good night! I must be toddling."

"He's pretty cool over it," said a tall, languid man, leaning up against the mantelpiece.

"Yes," replied a jovial barrister, as he lit a cigar; "but he doesn't forget a thing of that kind. It was a most shameful attack; and I'll be bound he'll pay off Mr. Shunkle, or Mr. Bunkle, or whatever his name is, one of these fine days."

They kept things pretty dark at the Bubble; but it began to be rumoured that there was something in Mr. Shunkle's comedy; that the management thought a great deal of it, and that there was every prospect of its being a great success. Despite all the efforts of the manager of the Bubble to keep everything connected with the new play a profound secret, little bits of exclusive news, and scraps of special information crept out, and filtered through the gossip of the clubs. It was told how Smatheram, the well-known scene-painter, had been sent off to Brittany to make especial studies for the scenery, what superb furniture there was in the third act, and what an admirable scene was made of a Breton Pardon. Furthermore, people who had seen Miss Dora Dasolite, said she was enchanted with her part, and she had a delightful little *chansonnette* in the first act that was likely to be one of the hits of the season. Tom Twitterly, handsomest and cleverest of light comedians, usually so difficult to please, said his part "was really not half bad, and had one or two good things in it, don't you know." People who knew Tom averred that this was equivalent to saying he had a part of unusual excellence, and that he was particularly well satisfied with it. Two or three knowing ones, who had been admitted to the rehearsals, testified to the excellence of the comedy from beginning to end, and prophesied a run of many hundred nights for the new piece.

Every one said it was something to be seen, and everybody declared they would be there the first night. There was a deal of mystery and uncertainty as to when the piece would be produced. It was put off from time to time; but at last the eyes of enthusiasts were gladdened with the announcement that appeared in all the morning papers simultaneously:—

ROYAL BUBBLE THEATRE.

The Manager has great pleasure in announcing that Mr. SYDNEY SHUNKLE's new and original Comedy, CLOVER, in three Acts, will be produced at this Theatre on Monday, the 27th. The Box Office is now open, and places may be secured.

The appearance of this advertisement at least three weeks before the period of the production of the piece gave people notice enough; and, to give them credit, they availed themselves of it. Hansom cabs and broughams, servants and commissionaires, tore down to the Bubble; and Mr. Tonks, the active and energetic box book-keeper, had decidedly a rough time of it. About two or three stalls were all he had to dispose of by the time the real rush came. The libraries had all taken an unusual number, and had sent down early to secure an additional quantity. Several people had been there before the box-office was open, and had cleared off all the best stalls, boxes, and dress-circle places, and there was absolutely nothing left. One stall that had escaped observation, however, was discovered; it was pounced upon by two enthusiasts at once; they both banged down their money for it at the same time; and then fought for it like fiends. Mr. Tonks interfered; and in their mad rage they set to work and pummeled him. The consequence was they were taken in charge by a policeman, and marched off to the station-house. Altogether people became very angry and riotous, and it required all the tact and decision of the courteous acting manager to induce them to depart without committing a breach of the peace. A lot of the disappointed ones jumped into hansom cabs, and went the round of the libraries, but inasmuch as they found that every bookable seat had been sold, their efforts can scarcely be said to have been crowned with success. It was possibly small consolation for them to see in the papers the next morning the following announcement:—

ROYAL BUBBLE THEATRE.

All the Boxes, Stalls, and Dress Circle Seats for the first performance of Mr. SYDNEY SHUNKLE's new and original Comedy, CLOVER, on Monday the 27th, ARE LET.

A few days after another advertisement appeared. It ran thus—

ROYAL BUBBLE THEATRE.

In consequence of the extraordinary demand for seats for CLOVER on the 27th, the Manager has determined to add three new rows of STALLS. To prevent disappointment, immediate application for them is necessary.

The disappointed ones again rose at this. They rushed to the theatre, but found they were too late. They used impressive language,

they bowled off in hansoms to the libraries, found they had just missed their opportunity at each. Their language grew more and more impressive as their chances of success became smaller.

Everyone was grumbling about the difficulty of getting seats, and loud complaints were made every evening at the Ranunculus in consequence. Scarcely any of the members had been able to secure places, and Ruddleton, who invariably had the very best two stalls at every show that was worth seeing, was heard to complain bitterly that he only had a miserable seat in the dress circle. The manager of the Bubble was in high spirits, and his only regret was that he could not stretch his theatre to double the size for this especial occasion. Never within his memory had the booking for a first night been so good. Extra chairs, extra stalls, seats in gangways; everything that could be secured, by payment before hand, was taken. He looked forward to a prosperous season to recoup him for his recent failures; he invited Mr. Shunkle to dinner, and told people that Sheridan was nowhere in comparison with the author of *Clover*. At last the day of production arrived. There had been a final rehearsal in the morning. Everybody left with the full assurance that the piece must prove a gigantic success. Mr. Muffmothy, the manager, on leaving the theatre with Mr. Shunkle at four in the afternoon, was charmed to see a crowd already gathering around the pit and gallery doors. "Look at that, sir," said the manager, "and look at the component parts of that crowd, sir. My pit, sir, and my gallery are different to other pits and other galleries. Every one of those individuals, sir, is an intellectual man, and an artist at heart. Look, sir, look!" And Shunkle did look, and was quite surprised to see what an orderly, superior looking lot of people they were.

When some two hours later this crowd was admitted to the theatre, it behaved itself in the most decorous fashion. There was no hallooing nor whistling, nor shouting for "Arree." Every person took his seat quietly and devoted himself to a book or newspaper he had brought with him to wile away the time until the performance should begin. The whole of the pit and gallery was crammed a few moments after the doors were opened, but the behaviour of the occupants was by no means lively; it reminded one more of the conduct of a number of dismal young men at a tea-meeting, than anything else. At seven o'clock the inimitable Wriggleton appeared in that laughable farce the *Topsawyer*, but strange to say, though he was always a great favourite with the pit and gallery, the applause was very faint, and the laughter infrequent. Wriggleton was disgusted.

"The coldest house I ever played to in my life," said he to the manager when he came off, "and from the look of it I should say the emptiest!"

"Pooh, pooh! my dear sir, replied Muffmothy, "the people haven't come yet. I don't begin *Clover* till half-past eight, in order that people may have time to get their dinner over. You talk about the audience being cold, sir, why, I should tell you it is no ordinary pit and gallery that you are playing to to-night. These are every one of 'em, every one of 'em, I say, sir, gentlemen and scholars, who couldn't get into the stalls."

"Well, if that be true," rejoined the matter of fact Wriggleton, "I'd rather play to cads and dunces."

"It's very strange," said the manager, looking through a hole in the curtain; "people don't seem to be tumbling in. Eight o'clock, and the house seems well-nigh empty."

Presently Mr. Shunkle arrived. "Can't make it out, Mr. Muffmothy, no carriages outside. Nobody seems to be about. People are very late."

"Well, sir, you don't expect people to bolt their dinner, and hurry over their wine, just because you choose to bring out a new piece, do you?" replied the manager, getting angrier and angrier as he became convinced of the truth of Mr. Shunkle's observations.

The box-keepers, by this time, were beginning to wonder what was the matter, they had taken so few shillings, and had disposed of such a small quantity of bills, that they rushed out into the street to see if there was a flood, a fire, a snowstorm, or a revolution, to account for this extraordinary state of things. But no, it was a lovely night, and cabs and carriages crammed with sight-seers were being rapidly whirled by the door to other theatres. The linkman, the commissionaire wrung their hands and shook their heads, and could not, for the life of them, make out what was the cause of this mystery. It really was getting serious. The stalls now contained four of Mr. Shunkle's private friends, seven dramatic critics placed as far apart as possible—this was done on principle by Mr. Muffmothy—the man who fought for his stall before paying for it, and looked very sulky, and as if he were likely to demand his money back. In a private-box was Mrs. Shunkle, and a stern, stout lady who was Mrs. Shunkle's mama. In another private box were a few very grave people, while the dress circle was well-nigh empty. In the centre seat of its front row, was Ruddleton, looking more smiling and rosy than ever, with the most creaseless shirt-front. His mustachios more tightly twirled up than ever, his eyes sparkled, he swept round the house with his lorgnette. He bowed to a friend who was seated at the extreme left of the circle. At five minutes to eight the punctual and accomplished Mr. Merrybreve, the musical conductor, gave three taps on his desk. The overture commenced. It was sparkling and full of life and character. It was enough to set every head a-nodding, and every foot tapping an accompaniment throughout the house. It had no such effect, however: The house was terribly empty, and to use Mr. Wriggleton's expression, "woundily cold." The overture finished without a hand. Mr. Muffmothy began to get impatient. He sent word to the musical conductor to play the overture again. This was done, and the house was no fuller, nor warmer than before. The conductor left his desk and found Muffmothy storming and swearing.

"Well, Mr. Merrybreve," said he, with cutting politeness, "what do you want? Pray, are you an actor or are you a musician. Why are you here, sir? Do I pay you to wander about behind the scenes, or to conduct the band? If the former, I apologize, if the latter, may I ask why that band of yours is not playing?"

"Mr. Muffmothy, we've played the overture twice!"

"Then play it thrice, sir," shouted the manager. "Play it four times, sir, four thousand times, sir, four million times, sir. Go on playing till I tell you to stop!"

Acting upon these instructions, Merrybreve returned and kept his orchestra so hard at it till past nine o'clock that they all vowed they would strike for an increase of salary. The dramatic critics began to pull out their watches and grumble about the delay. The sulky gentleman in the stalls shouted "Time, time!" and Ruddleton in the dress circle said "Order, order!" Then the Sulky One in the stalls glared at Ruddleton in the dress circle, and Ruddleton in the dress circle sneered at the Sulky One in the stalls. At last the manager, who had quarrelled pretty well with everybody behind the scenes, had nearly come to blows with Tom Twitterly, and had made Dora Dasolite cry, allowed the comedy to begin. He could not well put it off much longer. Every place in the theatre was taken and paid for, and he well knew that the fact of people choosing to come late, or even to stay away altogether, was not a sufficient reason for postponing the production of the play. Indeed, it was well he did nothing of the kind, for the Sulky One was a solicitor, of large and varied practice, and was already revolving the question of damages in his mind. The bell rang and the curtain went up.

The first scene was very charming; it was a triumph of the painter's art, and Smatheram, who had doffed his spattered garments and donned dress clothes at the last moment in expectation of a call, was agast at the tame reception accorded. Ruddleton's measured pat-pat of kidded palm from the dress circle sounded like mockery, and Shunkle hid himself behind his stout mother-in-law and shuddered. The piece was badly lighted, for Muffmothy had in his rage kicked the gasman in the early part of the evening: that important official had at once retired, and was now in an advanced state of intoxication, holding forth concerning his wrongs at the Boodleumpty Banjo, a public much frequented by supers, hard by. Nobody else seemed to understand this department of the theatre properly; they did their best, it is true, but the result appeared to be a minimum of light with a maximum of smell, which was scarcely cheering as far as the audience were concerned. It was owing to the absence of the gasman that the moon was not illuminated, and half the point of the love scene between Miss Fanny Froat and Mr. Twitterly was utterly lost. Miss Dasolite was in a terrible temper when she came on, and she sadly missed the champagne-like impetus which an enthusiastic first-night audience always gave her; she gradually went down and down, and when she sang the *chansonnette* that was to be one of the hits of the piece, it was a flat

affair altogether. Shunkle's friends, however, plucked up courage and applauded heartily, and Ruddleton shouted "*Encore!*" whereat the Sulky One cried out "Order!" Miss Dasolite gave a faint smile, and the comedy proceeded on its tragic course. Shunkle's mother-in-law began to make satirical remarks, and Shunkle himself, stung to madness, gave a rough retort and abruptly left the box and Mrs. Shunkle in tears. There was a row royal between manager and author after the first act. It was getting so late that extensive cuts had to be made. One whole scene was dispensed with altogether, the consequence was, the story was difficult to understand, and the audience became more bored than ever. The third act, which contained the strongest and most pathetic situations of the piece, was not a little marred on account of the noise which the occupants of pit and gallery made in leaving their seats. But it was really getting so late, and these good people, after all they had endured, were both an-hungred and athirst, and suddenly recollected that though Mr. Shunkle's comedy might endure till to-morrow morning, public-houses did not keep open all night. The critics, too, began to gape, to shake their heads, to pull out their watches and wonder whether, after their notices were written, they would be in time for supper at the club. So depressing was the effect of empty benches, and want of enthusiasm, that the actors became more and more careless, and gabbled through their words and slurred the point of their speeches.

It was quite a relief to everyone when Miss Dasolite came forward and spoke the tag. It was a somewhat long one, and evidently written with the assumption that the comedy would be a tremendous success. Under the circumstances this was especially unfortunate. The concluding lines ran somewhat in this wise:—

"And thus it is the story ends—"

For now the play is over;

You'll see us oft, I trust, kind friends,

For many nights in *Clover*!"

"I'm sure I trust *not*!" said the Sulky One in a fiendish whisper as the curtain went down. The critics had all got their hats and coats on by this time, and many of them were out of the theatre. Ruddleton split his gloves by applauding violently, and he shouted "Author!" of if he were calling a cab. The Sulky One begins to hiss like a serpent, and muttering something about having his money back, made his way out of the theatre. The men came in with the holland seat covers, and nothing was to be heard but the voices of Muffmothy and Shunkle in violent altercation behind the curtain.

Half an hour afterwards Ruddleton looked in at the Ranunculus Club. The smoking-room was very full, and everyone wanted to know about the new comedy.

"Well, was it a great go, Ruddy, my boy?" said a theatrical enthusiast, who had been sorely disappointed at not being able to obtain a ticket.

"Beg pardon," replied Ruddleton, lighting a cigar about the size of a yacht's bowsprit. "Do you mean *Clover* at the Bubble? Waiter, some brandy and soda. Well, no, not what you would call a brilliant success."

And he puffed forth a volume of smoke, shook his head, laughed, and his eyes sparkled more than ever.

The next morning the notices in the paper were for the most part very mild, many of them extremely savage. The following afternoon a heavy fall of snow came on, and for a fortnight the weather was of the most inclement nature. In three days *Clover* was withdrawn and an old stock piece substituted at the Bubble. People could not understand how it was there was such a poor house on the first night of Shunkle's comedy. It was whispered that Ruddleton had bought all the tickets, and this so enraged Muffmothy that he threatened to indict him for conspiracy. Ruddleton would allow nothing, he would answer no questions, he simply replied, as he twisted his mustachios and his eyes sparkled, that he supposed he had as much right to buy as many tickets as he could get and pay for, that he might give them to whom he liked, and he imagined there was no law to compel a man to go to the theatre simply because he had a ticket given him. The mystery was never entirely cleared up. It might have cost altogether perhaps about a couple of hundred pounds. But, be that as it may, there was no doubt whatever that Ruddleton had his revenge.

J. ASHBY STERRY.

TRANSFORMATION.

BY WILLIAM MACKAY.

Author of "The Popular Idol."

"If fairy tales were true." Why that sceptical inquiry? This is no matter for the discussion of your *savans*—no question for hypothesis. Fairy tales are true. If it hadn't been for my belief in fairies, instead of now sitting in a drawing-room, surrounded by every luxurious circumstance that wealth can procure me, I would probably be—I am afraid even to speculate upon what I might have been. But the fairies adopted me. You shall hear about it. Ten years ago—that is to say, when I was a little girl of eleven—I lived in Tavistock-street, Covent Garden. An old woman, ugly and ill-tempered, took care of me. We had three rooms in a great tumble-down house, and although I was never hungry, and although money was expended on my education, still I knew that we were poor. It seemed to me sometimes that my earliest reminiscences were sad, and my oldest memory tinged with melancholy; but at other times when I tried to look back and back into the past—when my recollection shot beyond the edge of the Tavistock-street existence with its eight dull years—I fancied I had a glimpse of lofty rooms with fine furniture, beautiful paintings, rich, warm hangings, and servants moving respectfully and noiselessly about. By little and little I got the story of myself from the old woman with whom I lived. My father had been a publisher and bookseller, and we lived in Portman-square. I was his only child; my mother had died shortly after my birth. When I was three years old my father's bankruptcy and death occurred. The sale of his property more than satisfied the creditors, and the balance was devoted to my maintenance and education, Mrs. Turner, my father's housekeeper, being appointed by the trustees—not one of whom have I ever seen or received a kindness from—to take charge of me. Such are the commonplace materials of my early history.

Mine was a very cheerless life. I had no young companions, and never ventured out of the house save in the custody of my keeper, when she made excursions to the neighbouring market, or to her favourite public-house in Maiden-lane. Mr. Condry, my tutor, was a very mild and uninteresting character. Like myself, he had seen better days. He felt very much out of his element, and seemed ready at all times to apologise to the rest of humanity for his existence, as a circumstance over which he had no control. Mrs. Turner took every opportunity of making him feel his position (shall I ever forget the pompous air with which she counted out to him his weekly pittance?), and sometimes when his grey and straggling locks touched my bright golden clusters, as we bent over the same book, she would interpose some question about his "last situation," which caused the poor creature to blush and stammer, and sometimes prevented him from proceeding with the lesson at all.

I firmly believe that I should have perished miserably from *ennui*, or from want of sympathy, had it not been for the fairies. Among one or two things saved from the wreck of the Portman-square establishment was a splendid collection of old ballads. They were broadsheets, pasted carefully on to thick paper and bound together, making an immense folio volume, with rich binding and heavy clasps. The ballads were all in black-letter, and each was embellished with a quaint woodcut. The difficulties of the printing I soon got over with the help of Mr. Condry, and the woodcuts I venerated above the most costly engravings from the most esteemed masters. Among these ballads (there were about five hundred in all) some half-dozen related to the fairies. I read and believed. I have devoured a good deal of poetry since I made those initial excursions into literature, but never any with half the relish. The most elaborate productions of your most popular poets fail to touch me. But I could not hear any one repeat—

The birds with sugared note
Their pretty throats did straine,
The shepherds on their oaten pipes
Made musiquo on the plaine—

without dropping a tear in response. And I remember one story "sett to an excellent new tune," and describing the unsuccessful suit of a devoted swain, which to this day I value above Mr. Tennyson's best Idyll. How in my heart I pitied the unhappy man as he urged his requests, and related with gentle pathos the failure of his efforts:

I wooed her and I courted her
For to exchange a kiss.

But the ballads that dealt with fays and elves—that led me into the deep silence and sweet mystery of green forest spaces—these pleased me most of all. I took poor Mr. Condy into my confidence. He encouraged me in my course of reading, and assured me that he himself had a far greater belief in fairies than in men. He further stimulated me by lending me a copy of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," and an old edition—wanting a leaf at page 5—a leaf that I would have given kingdoms to restore—of Drayton's "Nymphidia." One night when Mrs. Turner left the room he rose suddenly and told me, with great blushing and stammering, that he was going away—for ever. He said I was a precocious child, but that he couldn't stand my guardian any longer. He kissed me tenderly and slipped out of the room. The worm had turned and fled. I have never seen him since.

I was sorry—but I had fiery consolation. Round my own dull world had grown another—not distinct from it, and still not the same. The beings of each had something in common, and the superior beings condescended to hear human communications. Their feet were adjusted to the roughest of earthly ways, and their simple language was beautifully intelligible. By reason of this contact between the human and the superhuman, those who were partakers only of the former element became in my mind beautified exceedingly. My fancy surrounded even Mrs. Turner with such associations; and in a dream catching sight of her, treading it like mad on the sward, I have cried out in my sleep:

"Bless thee, Turner! Bless thee! thou art translated!"

In the real waking every-day world, however, my custodian had experienced no perceptible change. She was grim, taciturn, unpoetical. She knew there was no one in the world so worthy of her confidences as herself. She converted her mind—if she had any—into the proverbial manger, and sat in it—snarling. She knew better than to throw her pearls before swine. One November evening she was sitting by the fire reading a Sunday newspaper, and probably finding enough in it to justify the low opinion she had formed of her species. I sat near her, finding fairy panoramas in the blazing coal. I yearned for sympathy. I determined that at least I should have speech. I broke the silence.

"Is it wrong to wish to be a fairy?"

"Dunno 'm sure. Better ask the parson."

"But I don't know any parson."

"Ah—so much the better for you."

"I do wish I was a fairy, Mrs. Turner!"

"Do you? Ah—then so you shall."

No temptation that I could present would induce Mrs. Turner to renew the conversation. She was economical of her speech to a degree of miserliness. But (perhaps, therefore) when she said a thing she usually meant it. I sought explanations of her strange but confident assurance. I heard nothing more of the matter till a week had passed. One very foggy day she took down her bonnet and shawl from the peg behind the door, and desired me to put on my things. I ran off to my room and returned speedily, anticipating an excursion to the market or to Maiden-lane. We left the house; the fog was so thick that we could scarcely see the bookshop on the other side. We turned the corner. We walked right through the market. Across the main avenue where the gas was flaring, and Hebrew fruiterers were standing at their shop-doors "clothed in their breath." I, clinging to the skirts of my companion, looked up inquiringly at her, as she passed unheeding our accustomed vegetable stall. But she strode on. We left the market and struggled through the fog. We soon arrived at a lane which ran along by the side of a huge stone building.

As we cut through the opaque atmosphere, the building stretched and stretched, it seemed interminable. At last we came upon a little crowd of girls and boys standing before a door in the big building. Yellow gaslight fell out upon the fog and upon the faces of the crowd. The boys were rough, mischievous, impudent. Boys with red hands and huge woollen mufflers, boys that made shrill noises, boys that kept their shoulders up to their ears, and with their hands deeply immersed in their pockets, pattered their feet on the greasy pavement to keep themselves warm, and made faces at new-comers to keep themselves merry. Instinctively I shrank closer to the skirts of my guide. She had no intention of remaining in the crowd, but pushed her way into the lighted passage. She spoke to a man in a glass office, and he, looking kindly at me, conducted us through another long dark passage; till we arrived at a door, which the man from the glass office opened. The occupant of this room was a small, cross man, with a bright eye and a heavy black moustache. He evidently knew Mrs. Turner, for he said, "How d'ye do?" All this was so new, so strange to me, that I began to feel dizzy and to look pale. The little man looked so very cross, too, that I felt afraid almost to draw my breath. He went to a press, and produced a book. He turned over the pages, and handed it to me, with the gruff request, "Read those five lines." Kind Heaven! It was the "Midsummer Night's Dream." I was myself again. Titania's magic restored me, Puck whispered sweet encouragements. I read. The fierce man looked at me as I closed the book, and said, with something like a smile of pleasure:

"By Jove, she pronounces her H's! Mrs. Turner, you're my good angel. Begad, we can retain the Queen's speeches after all. She'll be able for 'em, I'll be bound."

"Ah, I dessay," replied Mrs. Turner, "and I suppose now she'll be worth something—a share in the profits of the 'ouse, maybe."

"My good woman, I shall be extremely glad to engage our young friend as a petty-principal at a salary of one pound per week. There'll be a 'call' to-morrow at half-past ten. I'm very busy. Good morning."

I was delighted to get out into the air again—thick though it was—for I felt dazed and faintish, and hardly noticed the red-handed boys who still stood in the yellow light, shivering but noisy. Mrs. Turner gave a few grunts of satisfaction, and I was pleased at the idea of becoming a fairy, but still exceedingly puzzled at the manner the translation was to be effected withal.

I need not unfold the stages by which I arrived at a true understanding of the case. Nor do I care to describe those numerous rehearsals at which, arrayed in ordinary mortal costume, we went through the fairy legend, nor to record the various disenchantments—crueller to me than mere bodily inflictions—which I experienced. One holding a faith less enthusiastically would have been sadly staggered at the spectacle of Queen Mab in Balmoral boots and Dolly Varden habit loudly abusing a stage-manager, and uttering expressions forbidden to well-regulated mortals even, but beyond the innocent ken of fays. It grieved me, too, that King Oberon should quench his frequent thirst with porter. I was an attentive and willing pupil, and quickly learned all the graceful motions which our ballet-master had to impart. Time sped on. Two dress rehearsals took place, and we were pronounced perfect. At last, pantomime night itself arrived, when the result of our labours was to be displayed to the public. I and my fairy attendants were to appear in the fourth scene. Enveloped in an immense chrysalis of shawl, I sat nervously in the dressing-room, a subterranean dungeon, in which two old women assisted in the adornment of eight of us. I forget how many similar vaults there were, but a great number. At last the call came. I jumped to the floor, and one of the dressers ran over to remove my shawl-chrysalis. I was dressed in plain white. A pearl necklace was lustrous round my throat. My golden hair, bound over my forehead with a blue ribbon, floated behind, and over my head a star supported by invisible and tiny wire, twinkled in the gaslight. In my right hand I carried a thin white wand. The dresser kissed me—it was an encouraging salute, though not untainted with a flavour of gin and snuff—and I hurried off.

I bounded on to the stage. Now may all elfin powers protect me! Under spreading trees stretched green spaces of sward. Waterfalls with real water trickled along shelving rocks. Huge mushrooms sprouted at the gnarled base of oaks. Strains of gentle music floated across the scene, and we fairies—there were fifty of us, and I the queen—danced and sported on the grass, and made pretty postures at the waterfall. And when I came to give my commands, the house (as I was afterwards informed, for I was unheeded of that outer world),

applauded rapturously, amazed to hear a little girl upon the stage gifted with a profound knowledge of the letter H. It was all as real to me as the black-letter ballads, or Drayton's "Nymphidia," or the "Midsummer Night's Dream." I exerted myself, not for praise of that well-dressed mob they call "the house," but for very love of the congenial sport. I was thoroughly exhausted when the transformation scene came. In this we fairies were to take a part. Our part of it was a great array of flowers, in the centre of each of them a fairy figure. I was assisted into my flower by a carpenter, my dress arranged, my hand placed under my cheek, and my wand left resting among the petals. Then the vast leaves of the flower were closed upon me, and I fell fast asleep. Whether this untimely somnolence was induced by excitement, or by heat, or by exhaustion, I know not. And as I slept I dreamed. The story in which I had been an actor was continued and extended in my vision, but more beautiful. I was become dear to the tiny inhabitants of Fairyland; I was to leave their dwellings no more; and to dance all night and sing, performing no slightest labour, and supported by their sweet ministrations. The atmosphere of the dream was heavy with odours of the forest, and flooded with the white moon rays. I was very fast asleep. When the scene was discovered to the audience I was undisturbed by their cheers. The leaves of the flowers slowly opened, displaying the recumbent elves, but I was unconscious of the eyes that peered at me. The stage was flooded with red streams of light, but although the rays may have penetrated to my dream, tingling the leaves of the forest, they could not dispel my vision. The brilliant scene was shut out from the audience, and the usual merriment of the clown was taking place in its stead. The other fairies were jumping from their flower-buds and hurrying off; the carpenters were busy reducing the spectacle to chaos; the ballet departing; the chorus strolling off, and debating the chances of a good run. In the midst of all the strange confusion I slept and dreamed. And there came to me in my dream—seeming part of it, and yet too defined to partake of its essence—a warm pressure on my cheek. I started up to see whether it had a basis of reality. I looked, and rubbed my eyes. A grey-headed gentleman, with a kind, handsome face, was bending over me; it looked like a face known long ago. Had I dreamt it, or was it a revelation, or was it a memory of features familiar to me in the old days when—? The gentleman was the author of the pantomime, and had come round to thank me—me! for my intelligent performance. Only fancy!

He lifted me tenderly out of my floral dormitory. I never entered that sleeping-place again. A carpenter unbent the gigantic leaves, and carried them away. When again they were reset another fairy queen reclined among them. I walked off holding the gentleman's hand. How shall I relate what must seem prosaic, his discovery of my identity? Or the fact—related to me on that discovery being made—that my parent had been his generous patron. For ten years I have lived as a member of his own family. It is in his house that I write these words. When an acquaintance newly introduced seems to wish an explanation of my presence, he says that I am "the daughter of an old friend." But I, unwilling to lose my faith in the fairies who were instrumental in effecting my translation, or to conceal my gratitude to a mortal kindly and gentle as themselves, always seek an early opportunity of telling the newly-introduced acquaintance the story of my Transformation.



MRS. BROWN'S
CHRISTMAS HAMPER
BY ARTHUR SKETCHLEY.

thru' Mrs. Trimble a springin' up agin that sharp just as I'd been and 'elped 'er into it, as it were one of 'er fits come on, so in course 'eld 'er down in the chair with all my force, as she couldn't make me understand were agony poor thing, but keep a splutterin' in my face thro' a stammerin' that dreadful, as she wouldn't get the word "pins," out of 'er mouth and only got up thro' givin' me a violent blow in the chest as sent me staggerin' backwards to the door, just as the gal came in at thro' bringin' up the tea things as we all went over together, but no bones broke, nor yet anything else but a 'andle off a cup, and it's lucky as the tea and toast were a follerin' with the milk, tho' I should'n't 'ave thought Mrs. Trimbles would 'ave 'ad the strength to 'ave struck a blow as sent me backwards like that, but in course she were drove to it a bein' goaded to fury as the sayin' is, with a large-sized darning needle a tearin' you to bits, as is nearly as bad as the dog three doors off as broke 'is chain and come over the wall and pinned old Sinful from behind as was a standin' on a ladder a nailin' up a creeper as grewed over the back parlour winder and 'ad to be cut off thro' 'avin' locked 'is teeth thro' the old man's clothes as was corderoy shorts as wanted to make out as I'd set the dog on to 'im as certainly did say "seize 'im," thro' 'avin' see a rat come out of our dusthole jest as the dog come over the wall at the bottom of our garden, and knowin' as he were a beggar at rats, but never dreamin' as he'd bolt over the palin's and pin old Sinful like that, as were, in course, takin' of 'im at a non plush, as the sayin' is. Not as that's an excuse for that old man to call me them foul names, from the top of 'is dust'ole, as made me give 'im the clothes-prop over 'is bald head, as I would 'ave done if he'd 'ave been Julier Seizer 'isself a-talkin' to me like that on my own premises; so, in course, we ain't spoke since, nor yet moved in passin', and as to 'im a-sayin' as our cat tampered with 'is pigeons, as I told 'im she's too much the lady to notice anything as belongs to you, so in 'is spite took and throwed bilin' water over 'er the fust thing one fine mornin', as missed 'er and went slap in the milkman's face, as give 'im such a back-ander, as sent 'im down 'is airy own steps back'ards, as stuck fast in the drains as was up, thro' not being trapped proper, as no doubt brought on that fever as laid the 'ole family up three doors off as turned to typhus; and proved a blessin' in the end, for the 'ole place were cleaned and whitewashed, and not afore it were wanted, as 'adn't 'ad a brush laid on it over nineteen year. But as I were a-sayin' Christmas is that changed as nobody wouldn't 'ardly know as it wasn't

midsummer, with the weather that muggy as must make butchers tremble over their prize beef, and as to poulterers, why they're pretty nigh distracted with a cellar full of turkeys, let alone game and sucking pigs as will turn in a night. Old Mr. Watlin, as lived oppersite us, he were the man for Christmas 'ampers, as he sent and took in 'is dozen, but give up Christmas, he told me, thro' 'avin' berried 'is wife and two sons within the twelvemonth, as one on 'em left a dorter as the old gentleman brought up in the name of Mary Ann. It were a lonesome sort of a life for the gal, as were about seventeen, when we fust come to live in the 'ouse jest facin' of 'isn, tho' not friends, 'im and me spoke, but never knowed her except by sight till over three year, and then only by accident, thro' the chimbley a ketchin' fire in 'er grandfather's bed-room, as 'ad been laid up with gout over ten weeks, and 'adn't 'ad it swep' since the winter afore; so in course would be £5 for the fust injin, only as luck would 'ave it I were a lookin' out of my bed-room winder and see the flames a comin' out at the top of the chimbley. It so 'appened as I were alone in the 'ouse thro' the gal bein' gone for some firewood, as she'd burn by the cartload if I'd let 'er 'ave 'er way. I didn't raise no alarm, but jest throwed a shawl over my 'ead and stepped over and knocked at the door. I never see anyone more frightened than that young person, as said she'd been a beggin' and a prayin' 'er grandpa to let 'er 'ave the sweeps, as wouldn't 'ear on it. Well, I says, he'll 'ave sweeps and fire-injins too down on 'im in a minit, and a pretty penny to pay. Jest then a smart lookin' young feller come up the kitchen stairs, a lookin' werry sheepish, and no sooner 'eard wot were up than he were up too on the roof of the 'ouse in a jifly with a pail of water down that chimbley afore you could say Jack Robinson. I never 'eard a louder voice than come from that bed-room as were old Mr. Watlin's a hollerin' "murder," "fire," "thieves." That young woman begged me to go into the room with 'er jest to convince 'er grandpa as there 'ad been fire, but she says not a word about Sam, as he've forbid the 'ouse. I never see sich a figger as that old man, as were a settin' by the fire, with both feet done up in flannin, covered with sut from 'ead to foot. He knowed me, so let me 'elp put 'im to rights, for the party as were a nussin' 'im were out, thro' a goin to see 'er own dorter. He stormed a good deal at fust, but we got 'im round, and I give 'im a good bason of gruel with rum in it, as made 'im feel more 'appy in 'is mind; and thought it were firemen as 'ad poured the water down the chimbley, and he didn't want to see 'em for fear of 'avin' £5 to pay for injins. So, in course, it were kept dark about Sam; tho' I give that young woman a bid of my mind, tho', about 'avin' a young man in the 'ouse agin 'er grandfather's will, as were well off, and mightn't leave her a shillin', not as I 'olds with parties a cringin' and a carneyin' arter old people's money; but yet, if you do live on your grandfather, you didn't ought to deceive 'im. She says as that young man's name were Cowell, a upright character, as 'ad been at sea, and wouldn't stoop to do nothink mean, and were a goin' for to be second mate next wpyage, and wants to marry me afore he goes. Well then, I says, all right, but tell your grandfather. She said as she durstn't. I says, why not? She says, he'd turn me out of doors. I says, let him, you can work for your bread, and I'll take you in till you gets a situation; but wotever you are, be open and above board. She says that's wot Sam always says. Well, she took and told the old man, as she were a givin' of 'im his supper two nights arter, as didn't rave nor yet storm, but told 'er to find another 'ome, so she come over to me that werry night, and stopped three weeks, till she got a place, as she went to the day arter that young man of 'ern sailed for China, as were away eighteen months, and when he come back, they was married from my 'ouse, Old Watlin a watchin' 'em come 'ome from church over 'is parlour blind. Arter 'er 'usban went to sea agin, that young woman went to stop with a aunt of 'is as lived out by Barnet, and there baby was born, as she brought up to see me when jest over six months. He was a picter of a boy, and I says to 'er one day as she were a washin' and dressin' 'im, I do believe if your grandfather could see this boy he'd take to 'im. She says Ah! pre'aps he might, but he wont never see 'im nor me either, tho' I should like to ask 'im to shake 'ands, since he's took to 'is room, but Mrs. Gamley won't let 'im see me nor nobody else, he's a reg'lar prisoner under 'er thumb. Yes I says, so the gal as lives there told me, as 'ave been there over a year. For I knowed very well 'ow she'd been and got the length of the old man's foot as the sayin' is; and 'ad come to stop with 'im ever since the time 'as he'd been and turned 'is grand-dorter out of the 'ouse; and led the poor old feller a life, I'd spoke to him once a twice when he did used to come and stand jest afore 'is door, a sunnin' of 'isself of a fine day, but that was over a year afore, cos he'd been in 'is room over ten months, no one hever a seein' of 'im. I must say as I were put out at seein' 'ow that poor old man was a bein' put upon, and I says to his grand-dorter its a pity as you can't get in to see the poor old man for. I should like to see you outwit that old cat, she says I can't get into the 'ouse for she don't 'ardly ever leave 'im, so the gal tells me, except sometimes to go to market, with orders not to let no one in, and that woman in gen'ral ans'ers the door 'erself, and so does the gal, for that matter, with the chain up. Yes, says Mrs. Cowell, so she did to me the other day, a sayin' as grandfather didn't want to see me nor nobody else. I says, I only wish as I could get in I'd settle the ash of that old cat, but I says she's as deep as Garrit as the sayin' is, and must 'ave some game for she's been and moved 'im into the back parlour the gal tells me, so he couldn't 'oller out of the winder, nor yet speak to 'ave the baker, and I do believe as he's frightened out of 'is life at 'er, as is a downright brimstone for temper the gal says, and reg'lar rules the roast, and, I says, she'll be a-goin' now as is Christmas time, for she won't trust the gal with a shillin'. The werry next day I see 'er go out with a basket jest as I were a-takin' in a Christmas 'amper, as our Liza 'd been and sent up, as was a couple of capons and a 'am, with three pheasants and a 'are and a lot of new laid eggs. They was packed beautiful in fresh 'ay on the top of the 'amper, and smelt that sweet as it was like a go into the country, so, I says to our gal, you jest step over to Mr. Watlin's, and ask the gal if they'll take in a 'amper as I'm a-goin' to send over, and carry it straight into 'is room. She was over like a shot, and said as the gal would, if it come while Mrs. Gamley were out, as wasn't to be in till jest on twelve. I didn't say nothink, but I put that boy into the 'amper fast asleep, for his mother were gone to the docks to meet 'er 'usban as the vessel were expected daily. I couldn't trust our gal to carry that amper over the way for fear as she should drop it in larlin' so I took it myself and give it old Watlin's servant, as let down the chain for to take it, so I walks in arter it straight into the back, which I'd 'eard were 'is room. He says, wots that? A Christmas 'amper, says the gal, as Mrs. Brown 'ave sent with 'er compliments. I'd follered the gal close behind and 'eard 'im say, Ah! she's a kind creetur. I'm sorry she wont never come and see me, tho' I've sent to ask her so often. I walks into the room, and says but she will come with pleasure, Mr. Watlin. Why, he says, Mrs. Gamley says you called me a 'old brute for not forgivin' my grand-dorter, as I've forgave long ago, and sent 'er messages to come to me but can't stand 'er insultin' ansers. I says who give you them ansers? He says Mrs. Gamley. Well, I says, never mind that, but jest see wot a Christmas present I've brought you; and I give the gal a sign to open that basket, and there was that child a layin' asleep, a lookin' like a angel as woke up with a lovely colour in 'is face, a smilin' at me, and took and crowed as I picked 'im up, a-saying, there Mr. Watlin, there's a great-grandchild as you needn't be ashamed on. Poor old man, he were all of a tremble and says: is this my poor dear Dolly's child! Ah! he says, then she's dead. I says, not a bit on it, but's a stoppin' along with me oppersite, as shall come and see you this werry arternoon if you wishes it. So I give the old man the baby as held out 'is arms to take it, and jest as I'd been and done so into the room flounces Mrs. Gamley, as pale as hashes, and says: 'Pon my word, this is impudence. I says to Mr. Watlin, a takin' the baby from 'im, if you'd like me to stop with you till your grand-dorter comes, I will with pleasure. He says: yes, yes, don't leave me with 'er any more. Who are you? says that fieldmalo, how dare you come 'ere, with your parish brats. I calls to the gal as were a-waitin' and give 'er the child as I roped up in my shawl, and says, take 'im 'ome and tell 'is ma, when she comes in to step over 'ere at once, as will wait 'ere till she comes. You won't do nothink of the sort, says that woman, and Mr. Watlin don't want no visitors. I says: Mr. Watlin knows best about that, so I'll trouble you not to address me, as don't care about speakin' to no strangers as is doubtful characters, and I took and set down by Mr. Watlin. She says, if you don't go I'll send for the perlice. I says, do so by all means, and then we shall have witnesses as to who is to stay or who is to go,

or who is master of this 'ouse. Poor old Mr. Watlin didn't say a word, but set there as pale as a sheet, with his limbs all of a tremble. You don't want this field-male to stop 'ere do you, my dear friend, says that creature in a careynin' sort of way. So I gets up and says to 'er, wotever you are keep a civil tung in your 'ead, or else I'll show you wot I can do, tho' you do consider me a field-male. She give a start back'ards, and that 'amper were a standin' close behind 'er, as ketched 'er in the knee jintes as shet up like, and back she went a settin' down in that 'amper, as were sich a tight fit, thro' 'er bein' that short and fat as she were reg'lar wedged into it. I couldn't 'ardly 'elp a larfin' to see 'er a strugglin' for to try and get up out of that 'amper. I says to 'er, I'll tell you wot it is, you'll 'ave a fit, a tighter one than wot you're now in, if you struggles like that. She says you willainous old 'ussey, I'll punish you for this. I says you'd better be quiet, cos if you gives me any more of your impidence, I'll jest take and set down on you, as 'll squash you and 'amper too. I do believe as she thought I were in earnest, for she turned quite pale, and jest then there came a tap at the door, and if it wasn't Mr. Watlin's grand-dorter 'er 'usban' as 'ad come ashore that werry mornin'. I knowed 'is voice, and calls to 'im to step in, 'as he did, and I says jest take and drag this 'amper full of rubbish into the next room, out of the way; he did stare when he see wot the 'amper was full on, but with 'im a pullin', and me a pushin' we got the old faggit for all 'er kickin' and struggles into the front room, and then 'elped er up. No sooner 'ad she got up, than she tried to rush by me into old Watlin's room, but I stops 'er and says, now you keep 'ere and don't intrude where you ain't wanted, cos Mr. Watlin 'ave got 'is own relations with 'im, as don't want you, so you stop 'ere till you're sent for. She were reg'lar dumb with rage, as I walked out of the room. I didn't go into the old man's room for a bit, and when I did thro' 'is grand-dorter a comin' to fetch me, he was a beamin' with smiles, and wouldn't let them leave 'im, but made me give Mrs. Gamley 'er wages, and promise not to leave the 'ouse till I see 'er out of it, as I did within a couple of 'ours, as pretended to shed tears thro' Mr. Watlin's a refusin' to see 'er, and then went off in a four-wheel cab, a callin' me the most opprobrious names out of the winder, as show wot them chapel goers will do when showed in their true colours. And as to 'er bein' a total abstainer, empty sperrits was found between the bed, and the mattress as she slep' on, besides all manner of 'oles and corners. I never did see a man pick up more rapid than Mr. Watlin', as would make us all come and dine with 'im Christmas Day, and 'ad the babby at table in 'is mother's arms, and made 'is will in 'is favour, arter 'is mother and father tho' a providin' for an increase in the family, so as I were a sayin', I always 'olds with Christmas 'ampers, and sich like compliments of the season as brings about good feelins', let alone good cheer, as is wot we all expects at that time of year, cos it's all nonsense a talkin', for nobody never was jolly, nor never will be, as ain't got a good meal inside 'em, as keeps the cold out, better even than 'ot drinks, as often gives you a chill arterwards, though comfortin' at the time. So that's why I always 'olds with sendin' 'ampers at Christmas. Cos then parties 'as them luxuries as they wouldn't buy for themselves if you sent 'em the money, as would be sure to go for back rent and all manner, and as to old Mr. Watlin', he took to keepin' Christmas more than ever, thro' bein' that thankful to 'ave got out of that old wretche's clutches, as did used to rob and ill-treat 'im, and said she'd murder 'im if he even spoke to the gal, and we 'ad 'er took up for illegal pawnin' of 'is plate and watch, as were the game she were up to when she went out, pertendin' it was to market, so she got six months, and he got 'is property back, as were a loss to the pawnbrokers, but did ought to be a warnin' to them not to take things in that ready, as is an encouragement to thieves, let alone them as 'il put away their boots for a drain, as is ways I don't 'old with, not even at Christmas.

A FATAL RUN.

BY LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

Author of "Celebrities I have Known," "Reminiscences of an Old Sportsman," &c.

"Thou art gone to the grave; we no longer behold thee,
Nor tread the rough path of the world by thy side."—HEBER.

THERE is an indescribable, mournful pleasure in reverting to the companions of our youth, and we are still old-fashioned, and perhaps unworlly enough to have juvenile feelings, and strong associations spring up in our minds upon such occasions. Alas! for the brilliant imaginations of that time! bright and beautiful as they are, they wither away. These melancholy reflections completely absorbed every thought when the mournful event to which I am about to refer took place. A large party had assembled at Monkton Manor, (I give fictitious names, not wishing to harass the feelings of any remaining branch of the family I am about to refer to,) and among the guests were my Westminster "crony" Frank Cuthbert, recently gazetted to a cornetcy in the 9th Light Dragoons, and myself. Christmas, that inclement but hospitable season, when good fellowship is more keenly and uninterruptedly enjoyed than ever, when the nipping frost without makes our roaring fires and kindly sympathies burn brighter within—this happy season was kept up with the good old customs of our ancestors (albeit, the feudal grandeur had in other respects decayed), and was revered by all classes, not alone as a season of solemn festival, but as one of jocund mirth. The crowded halls were enlivened with the busy hum of men; the tables groaned beneath the smoking sirloin; the mistletoe bough furnished much merriment among the rustic beauties of the neighbourhood—all was joy and happiness. On the first day of the new year the frost vanished, and so sudden and great was the thaw, that the fox-hounds were to meet at the Manor House on the third of the month. Our host, Sir Harry Monkton, was a fine specimen of the English sportsman of the olden time, a master of fox-hounds, a patron of the turf for sport not lucre, and a strict preserver of game. Few men supported our national amusements more than did the worthy baronet; he was a first-rate cricketer, an excellent shot, a bold yet judicious rider in the hunting field, a fair gentleman jockey, a scientific tennis player, and one of the most active runners and leapers of the day. As a boon companion, Sir Harry was ever a welcome guest at the table of the master-spirits of the age, and if he had a vice, it was one looked upon as venial in the days of which I write—that of hard drinking, and even for that, he would quote classical authority—for be it remembered, he remarked, Caius Piso, who flourished under Tiberius, was raised to a post of honour in Rome, because "he sat two days and two nights enjoying the sumptuous feast of his patron, eating and drinking continually at the festive board." I have, however, digressed. On the evening of the day that preceded the hunting morning, a large party had assembled at dinner at Monkton Manor. "Bring another magnum of port," exclaimed the host, as, in the absence of the ladies, we gathered round the horse-shoe mahogany, before a bright crackling wood fire; "and Hopkins, put a little dash of cayenne on the next toasted biscuits." The well-trained butler withdrew, and speedily returned, brushing the cob-webs from the neck of a bottle, whose rotundity vied with the enormous paunch of its bearer. The conversation soon turned upon the "noblescence," and the last gallant run with Sir Harry's hounds before the frost set in. Every minute incident was told and retold. One boasted that his horse had cleared a gate of six feet, with an awkward grip on the further side—another had taken a brook of greater extent than ever was taken before, thirty-three yards and a half—a third had set the field at a rasping "bullfinch." The landlord's bottle was now called for. "Ah! this is the genuine Sneyd, vintage 1800, ten years in bottle," exclaimed a young enthusiastic descendant of Milesius, belonging to a cavalry regiment quartered in the neighbouring town, whose patronymic Bryan O'Shaughnessy was always dropped for the sobriquet of the "Blazer." "Why, Sir Harry," said he, "this would make the strictest Mussulman forswear his creed." At this moment the old huntsman, Tom Nicholls, was announced, and the host, presenting him with a bumper of port, rose and said, "Let us drink to Tom Nicholls and fox-hunting, fill your glasses—hip, hip—hurrah!" "Tom Nicholls and fox-hunting," echoed the party. "Arrah, now," cried the "Blazer," "we shan't have half-a-day's sport if these two young 'uns," alluding to Frank Cuthbert and myself, "are kept at home. I'll mount Cuthbert on Dick Turpin, if anyone will mount the other." "I'll take care of him," responded Sir Harry, "he shall ride Sunbeam." We both returned our hearty thanks, and retired for the night to dream of the raptures of the chase. At ten o'clock the follow-

ing morning the hounds met in front of the Manor House, and proceeded to draw a wood close by, where they soon found a fine old fox, who gallantly faced the open, with the whole pack close to his brush, making as it seemed for Whimblemere Gorse; but changing his direction he flew down to Wrangborough at a tremendous pace. Few out of a large field were now on any terms with the fleet pack, which might have been covered with a sheet. Tom Nicholls, Sir Harry on his favourite mare Wowski, Colonel Exford of O'Shaughnessy's regiment, O'Shaughnessy himself, and Frank Cuthbert were the happy few who could be fairly said to have witnessed the exertions of each hound, for to my shame be it spoken, my courage had been, literally as well as figuratively, "damped" at a brook full up to the brim. Upon emerging I found myself in a fine grass country, with large enclosures, and terrific fences, when fortunately, after a sharp burst, a flock of sheep caused a check, which gave me and others an opportunity of joining the rest. . . . In a few minutes the fox was viewed stealing away, when "tally-ho" was again heard, and the hounds were running breast high. Blood now began to tell, Sunbeam skimmed away like a swallow on the wing, while Dick Turpin began to look a little distressed. "Give him a pull," cried the Blazer, "you take too much out of him now, bedad you'll have nothing left for the finish!" Frank followed the advice, and held the panting animal fast by the head. "Look out my boy," proceeded O'Shaughnessy, "there's a stiffish park paling, I'll try a weak place, give me time and follow, remember, lots of powder. Tally ho! he'll never reach the plantation." Frank Cuthbert eased his horse, so as to give his leader a clear field, who, cramming his spurs into his horse's flanks, charged the paling, and cleared it in gallant style. Not so his unfortunate companion, who, finding Dick Turpin a little distressed, had ridden him with such judgment, that he had quite recovered himself, and gathering him well together before he went at the park paling, would have got over it in perfect safety, had not a loose horse, which had thrown its rider at the last fence, galloped across Dick Turpin's track, causing him to swerve as he rose at the leap; the noble animal, thus put out of his stride, touched the fence with his knees, fell over it, and coming in contact with a large elm tree that had lately been felled within the park, broke his own back, and rolling over his rider, left him for dead. In the meantime I had kept with Tom Nicholls, and after a splendid burst, the hounds ran into their fox—Sir Harry had dismounted, the "who—woop" was ringing in our ears, I was congratulating myself upon having won the brush, when a different sound from the joyous one that "echoed o'er the plain," assailed us, it was the cry of Jem Atkins, the first whip, shouting for a surgeon. "What has happened?" exclaimed the master of the hounds. "Mr. Cuthbert has met with a bad accident," responded the man, "or I should have been up with the hounds." "Gallop as fast as you can," continued Sir Harry, "to Doctor Marsland's, and bid him come at once; on your return call at the Manor House, and ascertain whether General Cuthbert has arrived; if so, say we shall be at home in less than half-an-hour." My host and myself now trotted back to the spot where we were told the accident had happened, when a scene presented itself that haunts my memory to the present day. On the ground, with his head supported by two sympathising friends, lay extended the youth, in a state of perfect unconsciousness. O'Shaughnessy was on his knees fanning with his velvet hunting cap the apparently death-like countenance; the second whip was sprinkling water over the pale cheeks of the sufferer, a horse with stiffened limbs was being removed by some labourers, while two men with a gate for a stretcher, were waiting to carry what appeared to be the lifeless corpse to a neighbouring cottage—after an awful suspense of nearly a quarter of an hour, the sound of carriage wheels was heard, which on approaching we perceived contained Dr. Marsland and General Cuthbert. "Is there no hope?" burst forth the latter in a voice tremulous with emotion. Sir Harry took the distracted parent aside, while the medical man, having ripped open the sleeve of the prostrate youth, with lancet in hand, prepared to open a vein. "He still breathes," said the kind-hearted surgeon, "but, alas! I fear there is no hope." Frank Cuthbert opened his eyes, and for a moment gazed wildly around him. "My poor boy," sobbed the General, "would that you had died on the battle-field. God's will be done." "Father, dear father, give me your blessing," said the dying youth. These were the last words uttered by one of the kindest-hearted, noblest creatures that ever breathed the breath of life—of whom it might be said—

"Green be the turf around thee,
Friend of my early days;
None saw thee, but to love thee,
None knew thee but to praise."

For some time the knee-broken father remained mute and motionless, when, turning to Sir Harry, he said in a voice scarcely audible, "I have lost my son, my only joy since his poor mother died, the delight of my days, the hope of my declining hours, the boy who never gave me a moment's uneasiness, the brave, brave boy! The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." Then burying his face in his hands, he uttered an indistinct prayer. After a time the bereaved parent found relief to his overcharged feelings in a flood of tears. It was a melancholy sight to witness the poignant grief of this gallant warrior, who had faced death in many a well-fought battle-field, for the general had served with distinction in Flanders, India, and the early part of the Peninsular campaign; he had been present at the operations at Cateau, Tournay, Monveaux, in the low countries; the storming of Seringapatam; capture of Ahmednuggur and Gawilghur; battles of Assaye, Argum in the east; Roleia and Vimiera in Portugal. Towards the close of the latter action, he was severely wounded, and a medical board having reported him unfit for foreign service, he had retired on half pay. Purchasing a small property near Monkton Manor, he fully realised Addison's description, "there is no character more deservedly esteemed, than that of a country gentleman, who understands the station in which heaven and nature have placed him—he is a father to his tenants, a patron to his neighbours; and is more superior to those, of lower fortune by his benevolence than his possessions; he justly divides his time between solitude and company, so as to use the one for the other; his life is employed in the good offices of an advocate, a referee, a companion, a mediator, and a friend." To return to my sad story. No sooner had young Cuthbert breathed his last, than Sir Harry urged me to quit the melancholy scene, and to return to the Manor House. Leaving the disconsolate father to indulge in his holy meditations, I retired to the privacy of my own room, where I soon found myself in a raging fever. Excitement and over-fatigue had mastered a weak frame, and for the next week I remained in a dangerous state; youth, however, came to my aid, and in less than a fortnight I was pronounced to be in a state of convalescence; during this brief period the remains of my young friend had been consigned to the grave, amidst the lamentations of his friends, among whom none felt his loss more acutely than the warm-hearted Emerald O'Shaughnessy. Upon the morning of the funeral all labour was suspended, the whole of the gentry and rural population of Monkton, and the adjoining parish, attended the body to the place of interment; and to judge of the feeling that was evinced by all classes upon the mournful occasion, a casual by-stander would have imagined that some great national calamity had taken place, and not merely the death of a simple youth, unknown to fame. The small village of Monkton is by no means devoid of interest; its rural appearance, its neatly white-washed houses, its comfortable inn, its festive may-pole, its ivy-mantled towers, the gothic ornaments, the antique font, the curiously carved seat, and door-way, still remaining, indicate that its foundation belongs to a very distant period. The church-yard, too, has a very striking appearance; the dark foliage of the pine-trees, by which it is surrounded, forming a fine contrast with the gayer verdure around; while the venerable yews spread a still more solemn shade over the turf that "heaves in many a mouldering heap." Here the remains of poor Frank Cuthbert had been deposited, and as I paid a pilgrimage to the spot which contained the mortal remains, my grief knew no bounds. Beside the grave knelt a figure, his head bent down, and the falling tears glistened on his sunk and furrowed cheeks; his hands were clasped with pious energy, while his broken voice emitted inarticulate lamentations. As I approached he turned his hollow eyes upon me. They sent forth a look of sadness that quite appalled my heart, and again they were bent miserably upon the ground. It were a painful and thriftless task to follow the broken-hearted parent, who soon succumbed to grief, to his silent resting-place. There are two graves in the churchyard, close together, and alike. General Cuthbert and his son are side by side—the green turf grows equally on both—the village children sport over them—the careless passer-by heeds them not. The Fatal Run has long been forgotten.

MY LAST DAY WITH THE HOUNDS.

(FROM DUMBY'S DIARY.)

"You don't hunt now, do you, Dumby, eh?"

I am Dumby: and the interrogation is put to me after dinner,—very much after dinner, the ladies having been out of the room a good half hour. The question followed on my having recounted some personal reminiscences of two or three very remarkable runs with the P.H.H. or Pot Hut Hunt, well known within twenty miles of the seat of the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park.

"No," I replied carelessly, "I don't hunt now. I've given it up some time. The fact is that the ride to covert, generally alone, and the ride back again, sickened me. Of course, the sport itself—that's another thing. I wouldn't have given it up for the world if I could have had the hunting without—without—"

"Without the riding," put in a bullet-headed man with a turn-up nose (which might have been jointed like a turn-up bedstead) and a malicious twinkle in his eye.

That man (I had been introduced to him, but couldn't catch his name) meant what he said. It was not 'his fun.' Something, I don't know what, intuitively told that bullet-headed man that the person introduced to him as Dumby (myself. I wonder if he had caught my name!) was, as far as hunting was concerned, a humbug.

I don't often quail. But before this man I quailed. The best rule for when you feel inclined to quail is to turn it off with a laugh—a laugh generally at your own expense, or at half your expense. If the laugh is given in time you may certainly put it down as half or even a quarter of the expense you would otherwise have been put to for that laugh.

Had I postponed my laugh, and argued and asked what he meant? The bullet-headed man would have explained, or chaffed, coarsely, and if a man once begins to chaff coarsely, a delicate-minded, sensitive person accustomed to the courtly use of a bright rapier (as it were) is no match for a savage, clothed in a tough hide, and wielding a gigantic broadsword. While the courtly gentleman is saluting, and waving his *fleur-de-lis* from right to left, as gracefully as an Angelo, whirring through the air comes the broadsword—and wassh the courtly gentleman is reduced to half and half.

So when this sharp little bullet-headed man—who had been telling a lot of stories about himself and five-barred gates and rivers and ditches and "nasty places"—till, I own, he had quite taken my breath away—when the little hero of the flood and field took me up so sharply, and capped my remark about my unwillingness to give up liking hunting with that rude speech about the riding, intimating that, in fact, I *couldn't ride* (because that was really what it came to), I had nothing for it but to swallow the pill and smile, *my more—laugh.*

But what that offensive person had hinted was, I felt it in my heart, when I considered it quietly by myself, perfectly true. I *do* love hunting, theoretically. I love hunting pictures; the walls of my smoking room are covered with them, varied by some shooting scenes, and various episodes of "The Road" in the old coaching times.

Yet I used to hunt, and I have my stories (as I have already said) of the hunting field: all, at least, *founded on fact.* They are good stories, and sound very well, among others. They want touching up a bit here and there, but they will serve me with a coat of paint every three years for a considerable time to come, at all events, until I shall have reached that delightful age when, on account of some little uncertainty as to whether you've got any property to dispose of or not, and if you have, more uncertainty as to its disposition—its disposition depending upon yours, you can command an audience. You may tell your "grouse in the gun room" for the two hundred and sixtieth time, but you are listened to with rapt attention, and the laughs are put in their right places by the auditors, every one of whom is wondering in his or her heart of hearts when their elderly relation will have told that entertaining but familiar story for the last time, and what will be their reward in his will for having been patient for so long.

However, this is cynical; yet so was the bullet-headed man, who—but I forgive him.

And this is only a preface to a story (which may hereafter be one of my future senile anecdotes above prophesied), or, if not exactly a story, an anecdote with a moral to it (which the reader may extract for himself, and welcome), explaining why I quailed before that bullet-headed man, and how I have arrived at being perfectly convinced that I am really passionately fond of hunting—but for the riding. I gave up hunting, simply because I found that the enjoyment could not be got out of it without the riding, and riding I have come to consider a bore and a nuisance.

I lost a large fortune through one day's hunting. Wasn't that enough to make any man renounce it? Certainly.

I do not mean that I was a millionaire, and ruined in a three hours race. No! I simply mean that I went down to a certain place—its name shall be mentioned presently—intending to offer my hand and heart to an eligible young lady, a fascinating heiress, admired by all who knew her, and by me in particular. Shall I describe her? I will try. Tall, elegant figure, springy motion, greyish-bluish eyes screwing into you and then out of you, leaving your heart quivering like a moth on a pin; hair as golden as her own sovereigns, and a style about her in dress and manner—well, that's the sort of girl she was. Ah! what a pair we should have been, so justly formed to meet by nature, so unjustly separated for ever by fate.

We met, 'twas in a crowd, as the song says, at a ball-room in H . . . Square. We talked of future meetings, of the country, of sports. She adored hunting. It was summer, and it was perfectly safe for me to say, so did I.

"Isn't hunting quite the jolliest thing!" she exclaimed, rapturously.

"Ah! isn't it!" I returned.

Words could not express my rapture at the bare idea of a run, *with her*, across the open, popping over a hedge, topping over a gate, clearing a brook, and handing her the brush.

"Where do you generally hunt!" she asked.

"Oh," I replied carelessly, "wherever I can. Sometimes in one county, sometimes in another. I am thinking this season of going into the Melton district."

This was *not* untrue. I was thinking of it at that moment. I had often heard of the "Melton," and knew it was a safe thing to say. It was like belonging to a swell club, because it's a "good address."

"Oh, Melton," she ecstatically returned. "I *should* like to go to Melton. Where is Melton?"

Now strange to say that question had never struck me. I had often spoken of Melton, seen pictures of "the Melton," had eaten pies called after the hunt, had spoken to Melton men, and yet it had never occurred to me to inquire where Melton was! Odd; and for a hunting man inexcusable. It flashed across me that "Leicestershire" was a safe county; but just as I was going to hazard Leicestershire, the name of "the Quorn" struck me as sounding more like Leicestershire than Melton. Perhaps the best way out of the difficulty would be to pretend not to have noticed the question and to go on to some other subject; or touch it and glance off.

"Ah, I hope I shall have the pleasure of meeting you there, Miss Brankenson, by the covert side," I rattled on artfully. "I am sure you would give me a lead over a stiff country,"—she smiled; and said, "By the way, where did you hunt last winter?"

"Well," she answered, "we were staying in the neighbourhood of most of the Quorn meets—you know the Quorn?"

I smiled: of course I knew the Quorn. I had a great mind though to ask where is Quorn? I might perhaps have obtained a considerable amount of information from her, but it was risky for my character as a sportsman and "hunting in all sorts of counties."

"I suppose" she continued, "you've often been out with the Pytchley?"

"Well," I stopped to consider—of course there could not really be very much to consider about as far as my connection with the Pytchley was concerned, as I had never been out with them in my life, but having got so far into the Quorn and the Melton, I began to think I might as well make a dash at the lot and have done with it. I was pausing too long; she was becoming impatient.

"Have you?" she repeated.

"Well," I replied, "I was thinking at that moment—how many times I had been out with the Pytchley—(Oh!)—and I really can't say." I should think I couldn't. Miss Brankenson lifted her eyebrows, and expressed herself astonished that she had never seen me there.

This gave me an opportunity.

"Had I had the good fortune to have seen you there, Miss Brankenson, I'm sure I should never have forgotten the one occasion, at all events, when I hunted with the Pytchley."

The compliment was Grandisonian, perhaps. I find mine are, when I want them to be most light, startling and telling, only they come as if I were unloading a stone cart. Still, one of them goes a long way, without, I flatter myself, going too far.

And again, fortunately, women, like foreigners, are so kind, they pardon mistakes in expression for the sake of the good intention.

I am sure she liked my compliment: she seemed to feel that there were more where that came from, need I say, from my heart—from the very depths of my heart, and it was pumped up with a considerable amount of labour.

Well, we were to meet again—somewhere.

Our tastes were similar. On everything. But our joint-stock was hunting, and if we had never gone beyond talking about it, we might have been married long ago.

But it was not to be; and consequently it wasn't.

Winter came. A hard winter. Just the very season to talk about hunting. It was a rare time for me. I hadn't got a horse: didn't mean to buy, and didn't wish to hire. In short, I took this opportunity of regretfully giving up hunting.

I can, *entre nous*, put down the exact number of times I've been out with the hounds (I throw this in to remove all doubts in the reader's mind):—

1st.—When I went out in somebody else's breeches. Never was so uncomfortable or in such pain. Got as far as the last toll-bar in sight of the meet. Asked the toll-keeper to oblige me with a knife. He did so, and I was obliged to slit the cords at the knee. Couldn't hunt in such a costume. So returned home. The slit didn't show much, and so I returned home in style. N.B.—Going out and coming back, the two things I profess to object to most strongly, are, after all perhaps, the best part of a day's hunting.

2nd occasion of going out with hounds.

On a young horse which rushed at a fence. Cannoned against another horse, knocked me off into a ditch on the right, and he (the horse) fell on his back in a ditch on the left. The whole field cleared the two ditches, we lying snugly, and then some farm labourers got us both out. We jogged home. The effect of the return was good, as I looked as if I'd had a hard day of it. I spun out the time by stopping on the road several times. This was in Suffolk.

3rd time.—In Berks.

Went out on a clever cob. A blank day. Really enjoyed myself. No leaping, only scrambling about, and a pleasant ride home afterwards.

4th time.—Much the same.

5th time.—Much the same. Only with one run. We (a few chosen spirits) tore along the high road, waving our whips and shouting. We were all regretting we couldn't get into the fields. We found some side roads, with deep cart ruts, two ditches (a foot wide each—but something to say, one had cleared), and we were in at the death. Grand day this, quite the best.

6th time.—Elated, by my prowess on the other day, I tried a horse that could jump. He did jump: only once. I don't like his style. Thought him dangerous, and walked him quietly home. Bad day.

7th time. Returned to my old cob. Faithful cob, quite good enough for me; could climb, never stumbled: and couldn't jump. We had two runs and I followed a fat farmer who knew the county; we had two scrambles over broken down hedges, and all the rest galloping along cart ruts and splashing about in mud. Capital fun and quite safe. Returned home with the other hunters: some in pink: all jovial: all referring to what they had done: I referred to what I'd done. I found the rule was to contradict no one in his own account of a day's run and no one will contradict you. Enjoyed it immensely.

8th time. The Brighton Harriers. But I don't count them. It cost me a guinea and I came to the conclusion that it was capital fun and no danger: but I keep this to myself.

Well: that's the sort of hunting man I was, at the time I speak of. One evening, at dinner, I met my old friend Bodolpin, a south-west county man.

If ever there was a yachtman to look at, an old salt in port, Bodolpin is that individual. He always wears—well in fact he always wears what a pilot always wears, and there he is.

I knew Bodolpin to be a wealthy man, with yachts, steam launches, and all the paraphernalia of up the river and down again.

He was going down to Totcombe Water for wild duck shooting. Totcombe Water is in the south west and is on the sea. A watering-place in summer and winter, a place which to my mind, at this moment taken up with Bodolpin's stories of duck shooting and one great story he had about an albatross (a bird in whose existence I hadn't any faith in consequence of having been brought up with the "Ancient Mariner," bound up in a book of fairy tales) was as far removed from hunting as might be, for example, Venice.

Bodolpin winked with a pilot's wink to me and said, "There's a young lady staying in our parts, you'd like to meet."

"Ah! who?" I asked.

"Brankenson—Fanny Brankenson—hey?"

I was delighted to hear it. I should like to see her again.

"She spoke of you," chuckled Bodolpin.

Did she? My heart bounded.

"She said you had a long talk with her about hunting."

Ah! Yes. I admitted to Bodolpin that we *did* once talk about hunting.

"Didn't know you were fond of hunting," observed Bodolpin.

"No?" I returned modestly, as much as to convey that there are many more things in Heaven and earth than are dreamt of in Bodolpin's limited philosophy.

"Wish I had known it," he added regretfully "and I might have given you a few days."

Ah! I wish he had known it. I said to him, "What a pity."

"Well," he went on heartily "you come down and stop a week and we'll see if we can't knock up some duck shooting or something. I'm afraid there won't be much sport."

He gave me his address, 19 Tolcombe Terrace, Tolcombe Waters. Nothing could seem more like sea fishing and less like hunting. I accepted. She was there. Miss Brankenson in all her glory. Beaming with health. Bodolpin and Mrs. Bodolpin and herself, that was our party. Miss Brankenson and myself sat together. We renewed the sporting topics. We both regretted the weather. No hunting. Bodolpin had some friends in the evening. They were all Tolcombe Waters. They talked duck shooting; regretted the absence of the ducks and the fowl, and they went into . . . hunting. Miss Brankenson *did* hope, she said, that we might have some hunting. I seconded her, thinking that by the seaside this was only a female whim and quite impracticable. Bodolpin rang the bell suddenly. It struck me he was going to order up "hunting" at once. Now, though I knew Bodolpin to be a wealthy man, it had never occurred to me as probable that a man living quietly at a number nineteen in a second-rate seaside terrace, in what was only an ordinary lodging house, would have had a groom; but he had, and a pattern groom too.

"We'll hunt to-morrow, Simmons," said Bodolpin in an offhand manner.

Simmons touched his hat.

Hunt! what here? by the sad sea waves. Impossible. At all events I was out of it. No boots, no spurs, no whip, nothing with me.

"Oh delightful!" cried Miss Brankenson. "And I can have the Doctor, can't I, Simmons?"

Simmons smilingly appealed to his master, his master to him. Yes, Miss Brankenson could have the Doctor.

"Oh that will be jolly!" she exclaimed. Then turning to me she asked "What are you going to ride?"

"I'm afraid I shan't be able to manage it," I replied, as if horribly disappointed.

"Can't you manage it, Simmons, eh?" asked Bodolpin, abruptly.

"Well, sir," returned Simmons thoughtfully, and taking my measure meanwhile, with something of a distrustful air, "there's the Duke—you'll ride him, of course, sir—" this to his master, who nodded, and Simmons went on—"Then there's the Empress—but she ain't quite fit, and I don't think as she's quite up to the gentleman's weight"—a laugh from the Tolcombe Waters, a smile from me—I was hoping that Simmons would find himself unable to arrange—but on he went, as if enumerating a catalogue—"Then there's Flying Dutchman—" and here Simmons paused.

"No, no," said Bodolpin. "You must be on Flying Dutchman; we shall want you. Unless, on second thoughts"—having his second thoughts—"unless you ride Mephistopheles, and Mr. Dumby here can take Flying Dutchman."

A nice choice, between the Flying Dutchman and Mephistopheles!

"You'll be splendidly mounted in either case," said Miss Brankenson to me.

I nodded as if pleased. My heart was going down into my boots. Splendidly mounted! I see myself holding on for dear life to the mane of the Flying Dutchman, or going perpendicularly "ad astra" from the back of Mephistopheles. The *astra* might think I was coming to join them as a shooting star.

Simmons was of opinion that Mephistopheles would be better for me, "Because," said Simmons in explanation, "the Dutchman is rather a free goer, he's a lighthearted 'oss, sir, and no vice, but he is a bit free with a stranger."

"And Mephistopheles?" I inquired, with apparent carelessness.

"Oh, he's quiet enough, he is," answered Simmons. "You've only got to give him his head, and you'll have no trouble with him." Exit Simmons, after receiving further instructions.

"I've got no hunting things with me," I said despondently, "and I can't go out as I am."

Lor' bless me, that didn't matter! one of the Totcombe Waters could rig me out; his son was just my height and figure, and he'd willingly lend me his togs; in fact, to save time, he'd send round for 'em now, and I could try 'em on.

"Oh, that'll be the very thing!" exclaimed Miss Brankenson, joyfully.

They were the very thing. They fitted me much better than if they'd been made for me, which, in my experience, is always the case.

"Breakfast at seven," said Bodolpin, as he retired for the night. "We must be punctual, as we've got nearly five miles or more to drive to cover."

"And the horses?" I asked.

"Oh, they are there now. I keep 'em there and drive over. Good night."

"I do hope it will be a deliciously soft morning," said Miss Brankenson to me. "Won't it be nice? I long for a day's hunting. Good night."

Alone in my room, I began to turn the matter over. I hadn't ridden for two years. What would be the result? Should I make my will over-night, or should I leave it to chance? Couldn't I have a headache to-morrow, and be unable to go? Or be late, and compel them to leave without me? If I could only receive a telegram from London? No, too late to send me one, or I might have been summoned away on important business.

No, I foresaw that unless a hard frost set in, and the ground should be like iron and glass to-morrow morning, there would be no hope for me. My bed-room was a condemned cell, and I was the doomed convict.

I scarcely slept a wink all night, thinking over my reminiscences of what falling off a horse had been like. Here was I lying snug and comfortable in bed. What might I be doing the next night? Perhaps gasping in agony on a sofa; perhaps under a surgeon's hands; perhaps—but no, it was too awful. I shut my eyes and gradually dropped off into a troubled sleep.

Morning; anxiously I awoke long before day-light; tried to sleep again, failed: was restless; thought of this being the hunting day, and just as I was sliding down into a delicious snooze, the servant entered with my hot water, and the fatal dress, my borrowed hunting toggery, boots and all.

Neither spurs nor whip had been forgotten. I have a horror of spurs as they seem to act for themselves; I never can keep a horse quiet when I've got spurs on. He seems to recollect it when I forget it.

Down to breakfast; Miss Brankenson too. Bodolpin was in pink; burly and hearty. Miss Brankenson in the seventh heaven of delight; it was a lovely hunting morning.

"Delicious!" I exclaimed.

"Recollect," said Bodolpin, "you two youngsters," addressing us, "must have no larks, no unnecessary jumping, you know."

I looked as knowing as possible, but would willingly have pledged my vow not to leave the high road if he had only required that sacrifice at my hands.

We had a long drive, half asleep; and very comfortable.

At length we arrived. We drove right into the middle of the meet, which was opposite some fine old park gates.

Simmons was there holding a magnificent bay mare, a weight-carrier for Bodolpin.

"There's Emperor!" cried Miss Brankenson, who had already been saluted by several members of the hunt, who evidently were bent on flirtation, specially one dandy in a shiny hat turned up at the brim, and perfectly "appointed."

If anything could have impelled me to leap a seven-barred gate that man's manner towards Miss Brankenson would have done it.

"There's the Dutchman!" she cried out; "there's my little Flora!" She was going to ride a strong mare, which pranced and shook its head with a playfulness which was pretty to look at, but had an air of danger about it I didn't like.

Her Flora this was. A *jeu de mot* occurred to me, but I dared not utter it: where was my *Floorer*, where was Mephistopheles?

"Here you are, sir," said Simmons, who had now found time to attend to me.

Here I was with a vengeance! Such a brute!

Let me describe what I do like for choice, and then just imagine everything the contrary. I like a round, steady, safe, broad-footed, narrow-backed cob, of about fourteen hands, which I can mount (not being a giant myself) with perfect ease and elegance. I like him to have no "tricks," not to throw up his head, not to waggle his hind quarters, not to whisk his tail, not to stretch out his neck and shudder, and for his colour I prefer a quiet unobtrusive brown.

Mephistopheles was a bright chestnut, sixteen hands if an inch; addicted to throwing up his head, as if somebody was chucking him under the chin, and he wouldn't stand still.

I detest a horse that won't stand still.

First I had a difficulty in getting on his back. The stirrup had to be let out to enable me to do it, and then when in the saddle, I felt as insecure of my seat as a member of Parliament threatened with a bribery commission. If there is one thing above another in a horse's "trappings" I hate it is double reins, a martingale and a breast-plate. To gather the reins up quickly and properly is a difficulty, and you are sure to pull the curb when he only goes on the snaffle, or to get them unequal, and have him on one side all snaffle and on the other all curb.

Then the stirrups. Having had one lengthened, it was very difficult to arrive at the right length. They wouldn't come even. Simmons was getting tired of me, and said, "that's all right now, sir," as if he had to ride the horse, not I.

Then Bodolpin was waiting and fidgety, and saying, "now then, ain't you ready? We can't wait all day," and Miss Brankenson was flashing her little hunting whip, a proceeding which had a gay appearance but didn't seem to be appreciated by Mephistopheles, the whites of whose eyes I distinctly saw round the corner. He was looking back at me. "Looking back" is not a hunting song, but it might have been adapted to the circumstances, far better than I could adapt myself. The field was in motion; so was Mephistopheles. We walked quietly; suddenly some one at the head trotted; we all trotted.

Then, for the first time, I discovered that my stirrups were too long. I couldn't get off to alter them. I couldn't ask anyone to get off and do it for me. I couldn't see Simmons, who was somewhere invisible, on Flying Dutchman.

"I think," I observed to Bodolpin, as pleasantly as bobbing about on Mephistopheles' back would allow me, "I think—my stirrups—are—a little—too—long."

"Alter them as we jog along," said Bodolpin, and resumed a conversation with a fat man on a dray-horse which I had interrupted.

Miss Brankenson was chatting with the dandy, who was lounging on his saddle as easily as if he had been in an arm-chair. She had an eye upon me, though: I felt it. I began to confound the day on which I was born.

I plucked up and attempted to alter my stirrups. Mephistopheles' ears went back ominously as much as to say, "Look out! I know you can't ride, and if you don't look extra sharp, I shall kick up—just for fun—and expose you."

I struggled with my left stirrup: I got it unbuckled: it suddenly slipped and I couldn't tell which hole the tongue had been in. I had it: yes: shorter: too short for the other side. Mephistopheles was quiet, but inclined to jog just when I had shifted my seat: the right stirrup moved with difficulty: at last I got that fixed: they were nearly a pair—not quite, but I couldn't bother about it any further, and determined to give sixpence to the first countryman I met to come aside at some quiet spot and adjust these horrid things.

We got into a field. I knew nobody, and was soon separated from Bodolpin and Miss Brankenson. Presently she came up. Now was an opportunity for conversation: I was becoming more at home in my saddle.

There was a mischievous twinkle in her eye, as full of health and spirit she said "We won't mind what Mr. Bodolpin said, will we? I mean to jump everything that comes in the way. We'll go together: and do keep Mephistopheles in, as he gets on at such a pace I shan't stand a chance of keeping up with you."

"I shan't ride too hard," I remarked with the caution of an elder, "as I never like trying anything very difficult on a horse that doesn't belong to me."

Bodolpin was at my elbow. "Oh," he interposed, "don't be afraid of that. I give you leave to do what you like: don't check him, and with your weight there won't be anybody in the field that'll be within a mile of you."

"No," observed the stout man on the dray-horse, "Mephisto is well known in these parts, by Jove! he can go. Hark! the horn! They're away!"

They were. In a second we were all galloping. Mephisto going it like mad.

"Woa there, old boy," I said to him, feeling that I was see-sawing forwards and backwards and that my hat would be off in another minute—and they'd started too fast as I was going to use my pocket-handkerchief—"woa there—there's no hurry!"

But Mephisto wouldn't listen.

"Don't check him!" gasped out Bodolpin to me.

"Check him!" I cried, "I'm not!" then *sotto voce* "I wish I could, confound the brute."

A hedge before us—and a stile. One or the other, no way out of it and no time to choose.

I don't know what I looked like, but I felt all avry, legs and hat going about, as it were, in different directions.

I'm sure I heard Miss Brankenson laugh as she dashed past me, rode ahead and popped over the hedge, like a greyhound.

"Give him his head!" screamed Bodolpin behind me.

"I am," I return breathlessly, getting angry. I felt that I was holding on to the reins as if they were my last chance.

Mephisto struggled against me: he hurried on: he seemed to increase his pace tenfold: my breath came short: I felt my mouth opening, I was gasping, my eyes staring, my hair rigid, a rush—a rise—a momentary spasm—a feeling that Mephisto touched something in his jump—and we were in the next field safe and sound, and careering onwards.

Bodolpin cantered up. He, knowing the country, had come through a gate. He was very angry: "You'll bring the horse down if you pull him so hard. Give him his head next time."

Next time! How I inwardly resolved, that, if I could only see a fair chance and a quiet road, I would take my own time and leave the hunt itself. A flight of hurdles. No escape. Every one topping them, bounding over, no spills, no troubles, and Miss Brankenson looking back at me.

Mephisto, thinking I was going to pull at him again, stretched his neck out, took the affair in his own hands, rushed like the wind, and before I knew where I was, I was not only over one flight, but absolutely giving the field a lead and popping over the next.

Never was man more astonished than I to find myself the goer of the hunt, the top Sawyer, the cut-em-down. If at that moment any one had shown me a pond and rails with a bank beyond, and a river beyond that, I would have ridden Mephisto at the lot.

But then came a check.

It was all over with me. My blood sank to freezing point; fever heat was at an end. Miss Brankenson rejoiced when "Tallyho" announced that we were "away" again.

I had had enough of it. I wanted to sit still and talk it over. Two big jumps, successfully done, would land me for the remainder of my life. It was quite sufficient. I pretended to follow, but at the first convenient opportunity I found a gate, and quietly trotted into a lane.

Here I met Bodolpin and the fat man on the dray-horse. Then for the first time in my life I discovered how to enjoy the sport without any of the danger. These two, whose united weights were about forty-five stone, knew the country more than they seemed to know the foxes, for they pronounced with certainty, verified by the event, exactly what line the fox would take, where he would make for, and where he would be killed.

These were real sportsmen. They talked sport and had provided themselves with chicken, sandwiches, cherry brandy and curacao, and cigars—with plenty to spare. I enjoyed their conversation on sport, and we went quietly along the road, across an occasional field, through gates and finally waited in a meadow for the fox and the hounds and the few who were in at the death to come up.

Miss Brankenson was presented with the brush by the dandy.

"I haven't seen you all day," she remarked quietly, as we drove home.

What I should have said, what I was going to say, what would have re-established me in her favour, I do not know, for that idiot Bodolpin blurted out half snoozing.

"No, he's a wise 'un, he is. We had a quiet ride along the road and saw all the fun."

She would have nothing more to say to me. And from that time forth, except as a memory of the past, I have had nothing more to say to hunting.

There is a moral to this—but there's not room for it.

"DONCASTER."

ON our part, and that of the Proprietors of the "ILLUSTRATED SPORTING AND DRAMATIC NEWS," we hasten to express our deep regret that the following paragraph, which appeared in DONCASTER'S contribution of the 11th instant, should have been inadvertently afforded a place in this journal:—

A WORD TO THE WISE.—The winner of the Waterloo Cup is now at 40 to 1, but it is as yet premature to publish the name of the nomination. Honey-moon, who won last year, is said to be capable of rivaling the doughty deeds of Master McGrath; but 8 to 1 is a short price to take just now, and the owner of the dog I shall go for fears nothing. It is the first time he has ever held a Waterloo Cup nomination, and if I am not altogether deceived it will be a case of winning the first time of asking. If any of my readers care to write privately to me on the subject I shall be happy to give them the office—under the seal of secrecy—in time to take advantage of the long odds.

To the multitude of correspondents—amounting to several hundreds—who have replied to the foregoing, we have simply to say that nothing could have been more remote from our intentions than a desire to give the countenance of this paper to what is known in Turf circles as "private tipping;" and in proof thereof we may add that DONCASTER ceased to be connected with the "ILLUSTRATED SPORTING AND DRAMATIC NEWS" from the moment the Proprietors had their attention drawn to the paragraph in question.—EDITOR.

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GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY,

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GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"26, Waterloo-place, Londonderry, Ireland.
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GALVANISM v. NERVOUS AND GENERAL DEBILITY.

"Hillmorton, near Rugby,
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GALVANISM v. RHEUMATISM,

"Great Marlborough-street, London, W., Oct. 18, 1875.
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GALVANISM v. PAIN in CHEST and

SIDE.
"Tolnes, Devon, Oct. 13, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I am thankful to say I feel much better from the effects of your Belt. Having been under medical treatment for six months, and not finding any relief, I was induced to try one of your Belts. I have worn it three months, and have found great relief. I am able to go to my employ. I have lost the pain in my side, and my chest is much stronger. You are welcome to make what use you like of this for the benefit of others.—I am, yours truly,
"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher." W. T. ANDREWS."

GALVANISM v. INDIGESTION and

SLUGGISH LIVER.
"London House, Bexley Heath, Oct. 11, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—Having derived great benefit by wearing one of your Galvanic Belts, which I had about three months since, I feel it my duty and privilege to acknowledge my heartfelt thanks—first to Him who is the first cause of every blessing, and to you as the instrument. The complaint was indigestion and sluggish liver. I feel my health and strength greatly improved.—I remain, dear Sir, yours respectfully,
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GALVANISM v. THROAT and CHEST

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"Baslow, Chesterfield, Sept. 23, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I am happy to inform you that the application of your Galvanic Chain to the lady who had an affection of the throat and chest has completely removed the symptoms, and she is fast regaining her usual strength and health. I am now trying it on myself for a collection of phlegm in my chest, and I certainly have received benefit; but, being seventy-four years of age, I cannot expect at my time of life much can be done. You are at liberty to make any use of this you please.—Yours truly,
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GALVANISM v. INDIGESTION,

"Staplehill, near Burton-on-Trent, Sept. 25, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—For nine months I had suffered greatly from indigestion, which made my life quite a burden to me. A friend of mine recommended to me one of your appliances, and I obtained a Band in June last. I found immediate benefit on applying it, and am now, I believe, perfectly cured—at any rate I can now enjoy my food, and go about my business with comfort; which I may say is the more singular as indigestion is our family complaint. Pray use this, if you can induce other sufferers to try so cheap, speedy, and comfortable a remedy, and oblige, yours truly,
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GALVANISM v. SPINAL WEAKNESS.

"Syrdenham-terrace, Louth, Sept. 24, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—A short time ago I called upon you for a Galvanic Band for the spine. The lady for whom I purchased it has derived considerable benefit from its use, and she wishes me to order another for a friend of hers.
Yours truly,
"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher." EDWARD MAWER."

GALVANISM v. GENERAL WEAKNESS.

"Woolwich, Sept. 11, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I have much pleasure in informing you that the Combined Chain-Bands supplied by you in June last, and which I have constantly worn day and night ever since, have been of much service to me in restoring my strength, which was greatly impaired, and you have my full permission to make use of my letter as a testimonial in support of the efficacy of your Chain-Bands.
Yours faithfully,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." J. T. BARRINGTON,
Captain H.M. Navy."

GALVANISM v. JAUNDICE.

"The Brethry Collieries, near Burton-on-Trent,
Sept. 8, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I am pleased at being able to report the great benefit I have received from the Band you recently supplied me with, having applied it when attacked with jaundice. Last year I had a similar attack, which lasted twelve weeks, being, as my doctor said, as yellow as a guinea. This time, by applying your Band, I managed to recover in two days, without taking any medicine, the yellow colour disappearing in that time.
The best thing I can do is to advertise its effects amongst my friends, and let everyone who has already received orders from some of them at Ashby-de-la-Zouch.—With thanks, dear Sir,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." G. K. PILKINGTON."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Skelburness, Sept. 4, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—It is with very great pleasure I address you these few lines in grateful acknowledgment of the benefit I have received from your Galvanic Chain-Bands. I am almost restored to perfect health and strength and I doubt not that in the course of a week or two I shall be able to do without them. I shall not fail to make known their curative power to all who I know are suffering from Nervous Debility and many other diseases which are mentioned in your little book, of which your appliances are a convenient and speedy cure.
Yours obedient servant,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." W. NICHOLS."

GALVANISM v. GENERAL NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Ramsgate, Aug. 30, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I am happy to say that my back is much better; I continue to wear the Bands; I am quite sure that I have derived much benefit from your appliances, as my general health has much improved of late. I hope soon to write and tell you I am quite cured. I am in my sixty-first year, and cannot expect to be cured so quickly as a young man. Thanking you for your attention,
Yours respectfully,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." JAMES DOWSON."

GALVANISM v. RHEUMATIC PAINS

IN KNEES AND ANKLES.
"Cheap-street, Newbury, Aug. 25, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I am very thankful to state that I am much better; in fact, better than I have been for the last five years. I can now walk four or five miles, and do not feel but very little pain in the ankles. I am quite sure had it not been for your Galvanic Chain-Bands I should have been quite crippled. I continue to wear them at night round the ankle and feet. I shall have great pleasure in recommending your Bands to anyone I know suffering with rheumatism.—Yours respectfully,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." E. GOULD."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Coggleshall, Aug. 16, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—A gentleman in Coggleshall purchased for me of Mr. Seager, of Ipswich, a set of combined Bands, which I have worn for nearly two months, and feel great benefit from.—Yours truly,
"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher." E. J. FEES."

GALVANISM v. NEURALGIA.

"Lincoln, Aug. 11, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I had an Electric Chain-Band from you about nine months ago, which quite cured me. I had it for neuralgia. I have very great faith in your Bands.
Yours faithfully,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." E. BOULZON."

GALVANISM v. PAIN IN HIP.

"Underbank, Aug. 7, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—The appliances you sent me have cured my hip; I have had no pain the last two months.
"Mr. Pulvermacher." I am, Sir, yours truly,
D. WHITEHEAD."

GALVANISM v. INDIGESTION.

"Queen's-crescent, Haverstock-hill, N.W.
Aug. 4, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I beg to inform you that I have received great benefit from the Band I had of you some three months back for indigestion. I might say I have not felt so well for some few years.
"Mr. Pulvermacher." Yours respectfully, A. B."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Quay-lane, Woodbridge, Aug. 3, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I am happy to inform you that the Chains I have had from you have done me a great deal of good. I shall recommend them to any who require such treatment.—I am, dear Sir, yours truly,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." W. H."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Belgrave-street, Birmingham, July 30, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I am pleased to inform you that I have derived much benefit from the use of the set of Combined Bands (for Local Debility) which I received from you some ten weeks ago.
Your Chain Bands have done me so much good that I shall certainly recommend the same to my friends for any of the complaints for which you announce them to be of benefit.—Yours obediently,
"J. L. Pulvermacher, Esq." O. F."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Glasgow, July 28, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I am happy to state that I have received very great benefit from the appliances which you sent me last month, and that my progress towards recovery is as satisfactory in every respect as could be desired.—I am, dear Sir, yours respectfully,
"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher." A. K."

GALVANISM v. INDIGESTION and

CONSTIPATION.
"Birmingham, July 28, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I am happy to inform you that your Chain Band has been the means of doing me a vast deal of good. I suffered a long time from Indigestion and Constipation, but am now quite free from anything of the kind. My wife uses the Band for Sick Headache (to which she is subject), and always finds it gives her relief when she can obtain it by no other means. If you think proper to make use of this you can, but do not publish my name or address. I shall be pleased to answer any private inquiries of those who may refer to me.—Yours truly,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." E."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Gravesend, July 28, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—Since writing to you last I am glad to say I have continued to improve very much. I am perfectly satisfied with the progress I have made. I feel quite a different man since I have worn the appliances. I shall always take care to recommend them. Thanking you for your kind attention, I am, dear Sir, yours truly,
"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher." E. BERR."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Trowbridge, July 28, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I obtained one of your Batteries some time ago, but do not require to use it now. I am, however, pretty well, and shall recommend your appliances whenever I can, but should not like my name published. With thanks for your attention, I remain, dear Sir, yours truly,
"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher." J. R."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Wendover, Bucks, July 24, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—In reply to your communication of the 23rd inst. I beg to say that in the case about which I wrote you the necessary Bands were procured by our own surgeon of Wendover, who strongly advocated a trial of the same, as he was anxious himself to test the result, and I have no hesitation in saying that the benefit derived therefrom was truly wonderful. I shall feel it a duty and a pleasure to recommend the same whenever and wherever I can. I am, yours truly,
"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher." W. B."

GALVANISM v. SPINAL WEAKNESS.

"Yeovil, July 8, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—In reply to your inquiry, I may say your Belts have relieved the pains in my back.—Yours truly,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." J. VICHERY."

GALVANISM v. TOOTHACHE.

"Eye, Suffolk, July 7, 1875.
"Dear Sir,—I had toothache off and on for weeks together. I applied one of your Bands to my face all night. I have never felt the least pain since.—Yours truly,
"Mr. Pulvermacher." M. A. HAYWARD."

N.B.—MR. PULVERMACHER will be

happy in all cases where at the foot of testimonials only initials and partial addresses appear, in accordance with the wishes of patients, to furnish such information as will show the genuineness of these testimonials, in contradistinction to the fictitious ones so largely circulated by advertising adventurers.

For further Testimonials, both Medical and Private, see Pamphlet, "GALVANISM, NATURE'S CHIEF RESTORER OF IMPAIRED VITAL ENERGY," post-free for three stamps, of

MR. J. L. PULVERMACHER, GALVANIC ESTABLISHMENT, 194, REGENT-STREET, LONDON, W.
(OPPOSITE CONDUIT-STREET).